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AN
Exposition
of

MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR

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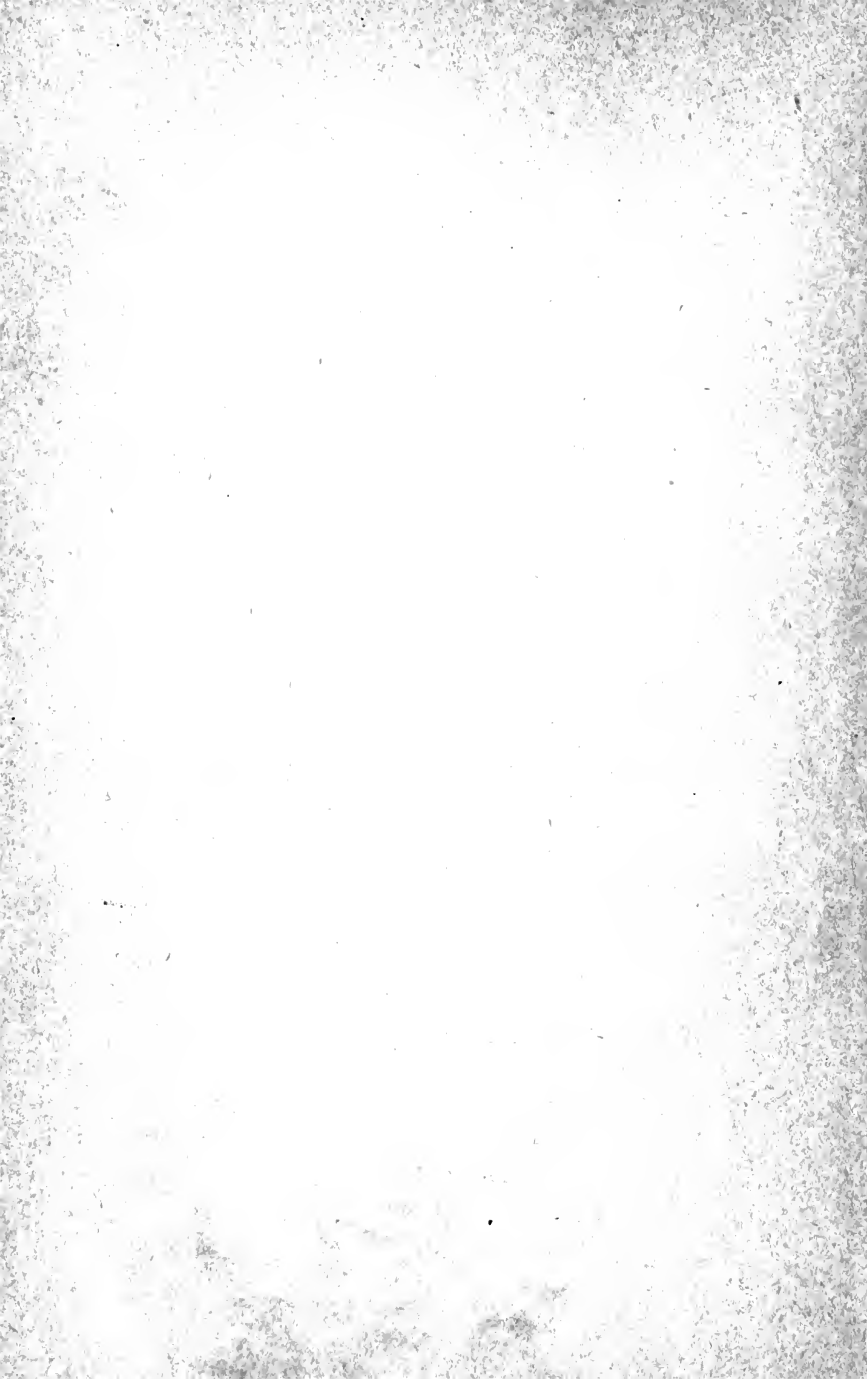
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His Glorious Appearing. — End



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING

AN EXPOSITION OF

MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR

BY

JAMES WHITE

11

REVISED AND ILLUSTRATED

“What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”
— DISCIPLES.

“When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the
doors.” — JESUS.



Eleventh Edition, — 100th Thousand.

REVIEW AND HERALD PUBLISHING CO.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

1895

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HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING:

AN EXPOSITION OF

MATTHEW TWENTY=FOUR.

INTRODUCTORY.

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3 : 7.

NO truth of inspiration can be more clearly demonstrated than that God reveals his designs to his prophets, that men and nations may be prepared for their accomplishment. Before visiting with judgments, God has uniformly sent forth warnings sufficient to enable the believing to escape his wrath, and to condemn those who have not heeded the warning. This was the case before the flood. The wickedness of the world had become very great. Every imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of men was only evil. It would seem that they had forfeited all claims for consideration. Violence and corruption filled the earth, and the only way to eradicate evil was to destroy it with its workers. But before doing so, the world must be warned of the impending doom ; and there was found one man who would engage in the work. Noah had faith in God, and preached for one hundred and twenty years the message of

warning and salvation. His work also testified with his words.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world.” Heb. 11 : 7.

At a later period, when the nations had again become sunken in idolatry and crime, and the destruction of wicked Sodom and Gomorrah was determined, the Lord said,—

“Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?” Gen. 18 : 17, 18.

And due notice was given to righteous Lot, who, with his daughters, was preserved; and none, even in that guilty city, perished without due warning. Lot evidently warned the people; and in thus communing with them, was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” 2 Peter 2 : 7, 8. His righteous life had been a rebuke to them; and we have every reason to believe that the holy example of Abraham in his worship of the true God was known to them. He had at one time been their saviour, and rescued their captives and spoil from the victorious enemy who was carrying them away. But when Lot warned his friends of the approaching doom, “he seemed as one that mocked.” Gen. 19 : 14. They, like the antediluvians, persisted in sin, and drank of the wrath of God.

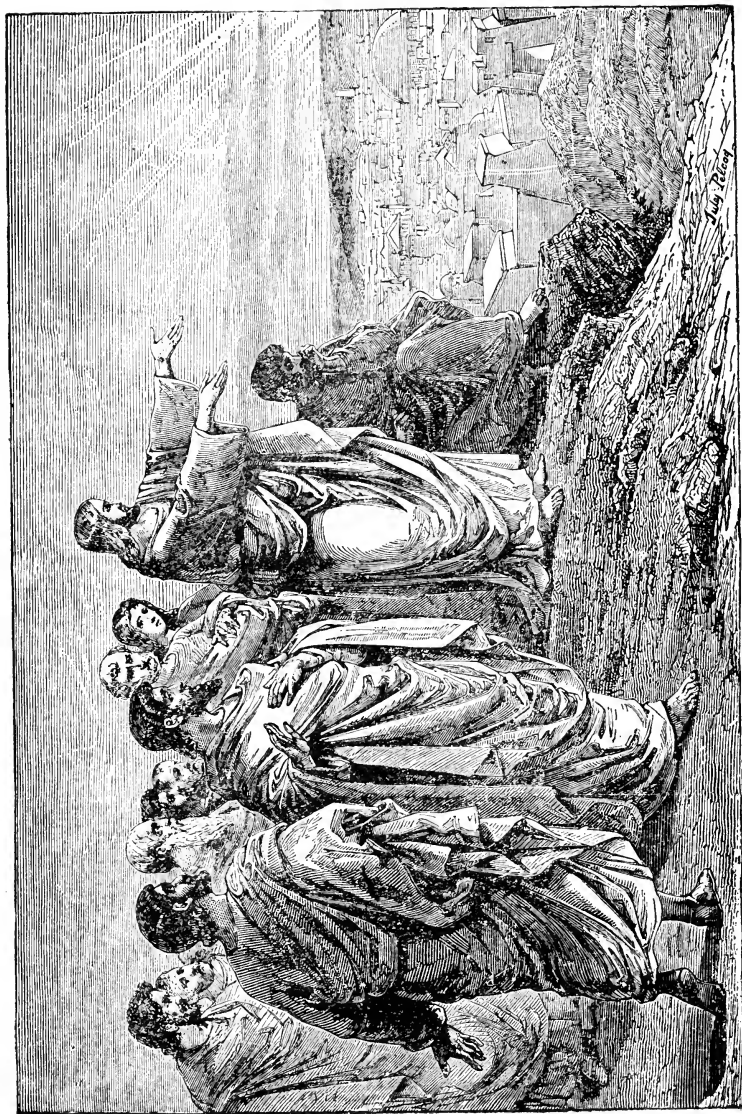
At a subsequent time the sins of Nineveh rose to heaven, and Jonah was sent to bear to that proud capital the startling message, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.” The consciences of those sinners told them the message was true; and from the least of them to the greatest they humbled themselves, and the overhanging judgment was averted.

Before Christ commenced his earthly mission, John the Baptist was sent as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." By this means the expectation of the people was raised, and doubtless many were through it led to accept of salvation, while the generation at large was condemned for rejecting the light.

Our Saviour in his time saw the destruction of Jerusalem just in the future of that generation, and faithfully warned the people, foretelling signs by which it might be known when the desolation thereof was nigh. Luke 21:21. Such is the testimony of inspiration respecting the dealings of God with his people in past ages.

All who accept the Bible as the inspired word of God acknowledge that he has been very faithful in warning people in past ages of impending judgments and other events which affected their eternal welfare. Such having been the divine plan in relation to past events, we would certainly be justified in anticipating such warnings of Christ's second coming as would comport with the importance of the event. But when we come to regard the future, and especially our own immediate future, the incredulity of very many is at once aroused.

But what are the facts in the case? Can anything be learned from the Bible relative to the time of the second advent? This is a grave inquiry; and, from the very nature of the subject, is worthy of close investigation, and a candid answer. It is a matter of painful regret that many, under the influence of popular prejudice, have decided that the period of the second advent is a secret, hidden with the Lord. While these can scarcely be reached with this subject, as long as they remain under the influence of those who denounce all investigation of it as prying into the



CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.

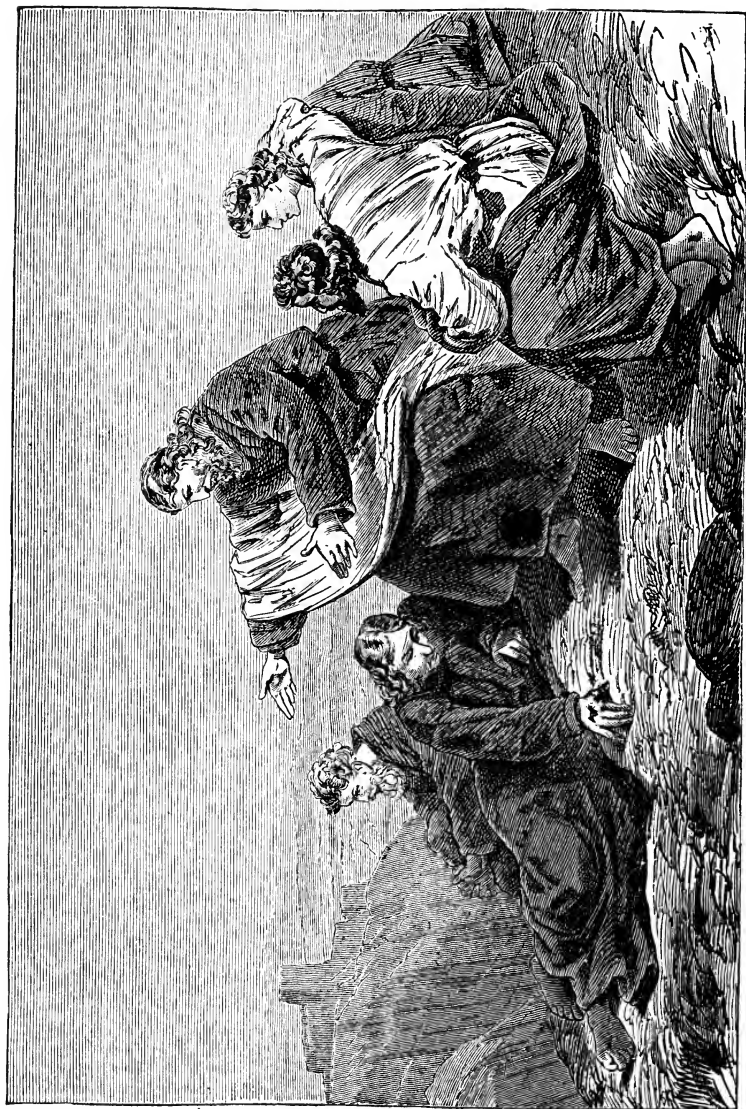
secrets of the Almighty, there is still, we believe, a larger class who wait for evidence before deciding.

We accept the Bible as a revelation from heaven. What God has revealed in that book, let no man call a mystery, or a secret of the Almighty. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Deut. 29:29. If the sacred Scriptures, in a most clear and harmonious manner, point out the signs of the approach of that great event, and if there is evidence that "it is near, even at the doors," the subject at once assumes great importance.

When the disciples inquired, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus did not reprove them for inquiring into this matter, nor tell them that it was purposely hidden from all men ; but he answered their question in the most definite manner.

The simple fact that the Lord mentions signs of his second advent, is the best proof possible that his people were not to remain ignorant of the relative nearness of the event. Add to this his injunctions to watchfulness, and the blessings which he pronounces upon those who are awake and watching at his coming, and it becomes a certainty that he would not leave his people ignorant of the proximity of that event. Paul also says that "*unto them that look for him* shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. And that a crown of righteousness will be given "*unto all them also that love his appearing.*" 2 Tim. 4:8.

With these assurances we may look for plain and emphatic tokens of the Saviour's second coming.



CHRIST'S PROPHECY.

Probably no other chapter of the Bible speaks more fully, and more definitely, upon the subject of the second advent, than Matthew 24, in Christ's own words. We invite the attention of the candid reader to a brief explanation of the entire chapter.

VERSE 1 : "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple ; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple."

Jesus had been addressing the multitude, in the presence of his disciples. He had reproved the scribes and the Pharisees for their sins, and had declared, in the previous chapter, the doom of the Jews, their city, and their temple. The disciples supposed that the temple would stand forever, and they called the attention of Christ to its magnificence and strength, and to the great stones that entered into the structure. On this point the historian of those times, Josephus, says : "Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their lengths was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve."—"*Antiquities*," book xv, chap. xi. If we compute a cubit at twenty inches, we shall be able to gain some idea of the size and "manner" of these stones.

VERSE 2 : "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

VERSE 3 : "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be ? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

This statement from the Master could not but deeply interest the disciples. And it matters not whether they supposed that the destruction of the temple, the coming of

Christ, and the end of the age, would all occur at the same time, or at different periods, since Christ, in his answer in this chapter, has distinctly spoken of each separately, and has given each its place in the prophetic history of events. If it were their impression that the overthrow of the temple and the end of the world would occur at the same time, it by no means proves that this would be the case. As the Scriptures show, up to the time of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their ideas upon many points were crude and inaccurate. Take as proof of this the parable which the Lord spake when he was going into Jerusalem. Luke 19. They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. To correct this impression, the parable of the nobleman was spoken. If they understood the parable at the time when it was spoken, it did not fully eradicate the impression from their minds, as is proved by what they did when they entered Jerusalem. We cannot believe that they would have hailed him as the Son of David, and rejoiced before him as a King in his triumph, if they had realized that he was going into the city to be condemned and crucified as a malefactor. Palm branches and shouts of triumph did not attend the steps of the lowly and the condemned.

John admits for himself and Peter, after they had seen the empty sepulcher, that "they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." John 20 : 9.

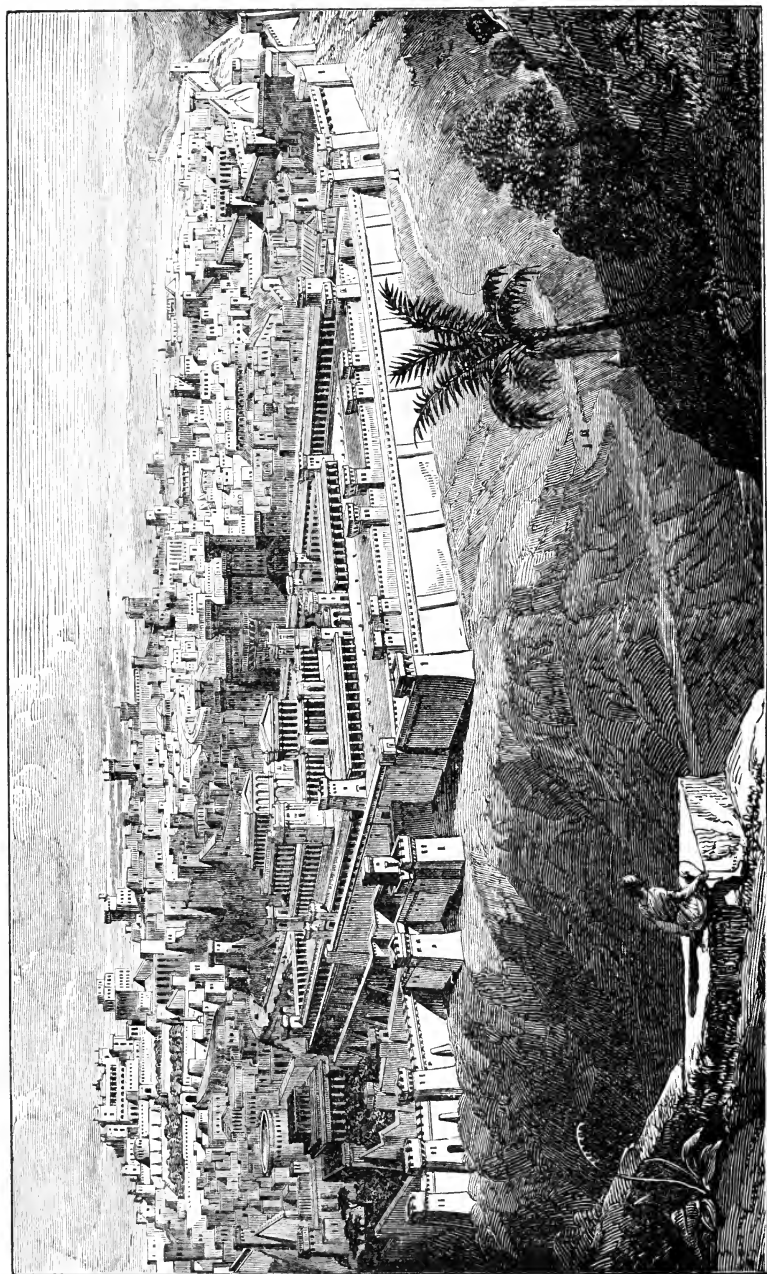
Again, after his resurrection, Jesus reproved two of his disciples, who, though they had trusted that he would redeem Israel, were then sad and disheartened. They did not then understand that Christ ought "to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory." The suffering part was still a mystery to them. And some of the apostles were so slow to realize that which he had spoken to them,

that they could hardly be persuaded that he was indeed risen from the dead. And after he had been with them full forty days, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom, they did not yet understand "the times and the seasons," and therefore asked him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

However the matter may have been entertained in the minds of the disciples, it is evident that their query consisted of two distinct questions in the mind of the Saviour. These questions relate, first, to the destruction of Jerusalem; and, second, to Christ's second coming at the end of the world or age. They were distinctly answered by our Lord; not, however, before the promiscuous multitude; but on the occasion of a private interview with his disciples. Christ here speaks to his disciples; hence his words in this prophetic discourse are addressed especially to the church.

VERSES 4, 5: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

Jesus knew the hearts of men, and that many impostors would arise, and deceive multitudes. He here warns his disciples, and guards them against the deceptions of corrupt and ambitious men. Such was the general expectation of the appearance of the Messiah among the Jews, that many would set up the claim that they were the Christ, to carry out selfish purposes, or to gain notoriety, and the credulous people would be easily led into the deception, and then be destroyed for sedition. We are informed that in the days succeeding those of Christ, impostors arose in great numbers. Josephus tells us of an Egyptian false prophet who led 30,000 men into the desert to show them



ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

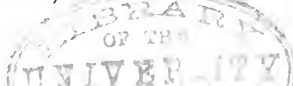
signs, and then brought them to Jerusalem as if to attack the city. He caused great pillage and destruction in Judea, but in the time of battle, ran away, leaving his followers to the exasperated Romans.—“*Wars of the Jews*,” book ii, chap. xiii.

In the former part of the second century Cazibee set himself at the head of the Jewish nation and proclaimed himself their long-expected Messiah. To facilitate the success of his bold enterprise he changed his name to that of Barchocheba, alluding to the Star foretold by Balaam. Adrian raised an army, and sent it against him. He retired into a town called Bither, where he was besieged. Barchocheba was killed in the siege, the city was taken, and a dreadful havoc succeeded. The Jews themselves allow that, during this short war against the Romans in defense of this false Messiah, they lost five or six hundred thousand souls.—*Buck's Dictionary*.

Dr. A. Clarke says, on the authority of Josephus, that “a few years afterward, under the reign of Nero, while Felix was procurator of Judea, impostors of this stamp were so frequent that some were taken and killed almost every day.” And at intervals since then the Jews who are all the time expecting the appearance of the Messiah have been repeatedly the victims of cruel deception.

VERSE 6: “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”

It is proper that we should consider what is meant by the term “the end,” used in this verse; in verse 14, “then shall the end come;” and in verse 3, “the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world.” In the first place, it may be unhesitatingly claimed that the term does not refer to the end of the Jewish dispensation, which terminated at



the crucifixion, nor to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred about forty years later. Because, first, Jesus treated the question concerning the destruction of the temple and that referring to his coming and the end of the world as relating to two distinct events, widely separated in time. Second, the signs which were to be premonitory of the end did not transpire before the destruction of the temple. Third, the second coming of Christ, the close of probation, the judgment, the resurrection, and the end of sin, death, and mortality, are frequently and prominently associated together in the Bible as constituting the most important epoch in human history. To limit this thrilling discourse to the local and long past destruction of Jerusalem would be to rob it of its force and grandeur. Not only would the twenty-fourth of Matthew which we are now studying be stultified, but very much of the life and power of the Scriptures would be sacrificed by such a course.

As to the meaning of the phrase, "the end of the world," it may consistently be translated "the end of the age," and in the margin of the Revised Bible it is rendered "the consummation of the age." For an inspired definition of the term, let the reader turn to Matt. 13 : 38-40 and its context, where the same words are used and repeated in the original :—

"The tares are the children of the wicked one ; the enemy that sowed them is the devil ; the harvest is the end of the world ; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world: The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

From Rev. 14 : 14-16 we learn that the harvest of the earth and the second coming of Christ are identical.

So that by no possible means could it be established that the "end of the world" means the destruction of Jerusalem. Further evidence is found in Matt. 28:20 where the same expression, both in the original and in the translation, is used: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." But no one would have the audacity to claim that this promise expired in A. D. 70, as it must have done if those questions of the disciples and the subsequent discourse of Christ related only to the impending doom of the temple and city.

VERSES 7, 8: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes have occurred all along since these words were spoken. Therefore, these, as they have ever existed, cannot be regarded as the especial signs of the end. It may be claimed, however, with a good degree of consistency, that the Scriptures teach that these calamities would abound in the last days to such an extent as to constitute a sign of the approaching Judgment. We wish to keep the important fact distinctly before the mind, that the sacred Scriptures do teach when men may not, and when they may, look for the second appearing of Christ.

The sacred writers have so uniformly associated such judgments as war, famine, pestilence, and earthquake, with the last Judgment, that the disciples would be in danger of concluding that the end would immediately follow the first appearance of these calamities; hence the caution given: "These things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Here the disciples were clearly taught that they should not expect the end in their day. This fact is worthy of the

candid attention of those who object to the proclamation of the second advent of Christ in the form of an especial message. These sometimes assert that it was right for the disciples to look for Christ in their day, and that it has been scriptural and right for all Christians to look for the second appearing of Christ in their time, from the days of the chosen twelve to the present time. And they decide that no more can be learned and believed upon this subject in our time than by the Christians of past generations, and that the public mind should not now be moved upon this great question, any more than in all past time since the first advent of Christ.

We have seen that this position is incorrect so far as the early disciples were concerned. They are directed to the distant future as the time when their Lord should come. They are assured that they need not be troubled at hearing of wars and rumors of wars; "for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Our Lord then guides the minds of his disciples, as we shall see in the examination of this chapter, down over the time of the great apostasy, and the long period of the rule of papal Rome, before mentioning a sign of his second advent. He does not intimate that his people during these long periods may expect the end. No, not once. But when he comes to a later time, the Lord names signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, and adds: "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

Mark this: Our Lord does not mention wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes as signs of his second advent; but rather as events of common occurrence all the way through the Christian age, which must exist before the end. And history attests the fact that these calamities have

covered at least seventeen centuries. The following is from a work of Noah Webster, LL. D., published in 1799 :—

“By famine and sword, 580,000 Jews were destroyed between A. D. 96 and A. D. 180.

“In Antioch, from A. D. 96 to A. D. 180, earthquakes destroyed 13 cities and over 100,000 lives.

“In Rome, A. D. 169, pestilence destroyed 10,000 daily.

“In Rome, A. D. 187, pestilence appeared and continued three years.

“In London, A. D. 310, by famine, 40,000 died.

“In A. D. 446, September 17, an earthquake shook down the walls of Constantinople, and 57 towers fell.

“In Rome, A. D. 539, in one district 50,000 died.

“In Antioch, A. D. 588, an earthquake killed 60,000.

“In A. D. 542, the plague killed 10,000 in one day in Turkey.

“In A. D. 679, a severe famine in England, three years.

“In A. D. 717, in Constantinople, 300,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1005, earthquakes three months, followed by pestilence, by which it is said one third of the human race died.

“In A. D. 1077, in Constantinople, so many died by plague and famine the living could not bury them.

“In A. D. 1124, in Italy, there was such famine that the dead lay in the streets not buried ; and in England one third of the people died of plague.

“In A. D. 1294, in England thousands died of famine.

“In A. D. 1346, in London, 50,000 died of plague and famine, and were buried in one grave-yard ; in Norwich, 50,000 ; in Venice, 100,000 ; in Florence, 100,000 ; in Eastern nations, 20,000,000. It was called the black death.

“In A. D. 1352, in China, 900,000 died of famine.

“In A. D. 1427 in Dantzic, 80,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1570, in Moscow, 200,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1572, in Lyons, 50,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1625, in London, 35,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1656, in Naples, 300,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1665, in London, 68,000 died of plague.

“In A. D. 1755, an earthquake destroyed the city of Lisbon, killing 50,000. In Mitylene, and the Archipelago, it shook down 2000 houses. It shook all the Spanish coast. The plague followed, which destroyed 150,000 persons in Constantinople.”



Doubtless the figures in the above list should in some instances be corrected to correspond with facts. But, taken as a whole, they do not nearly represent the ravages of death in their enormity. For instance, the Encyclopedia Britannica states that Hecker estimates the celebrated "black death" of the fourteenth century in the different epidemics, to have swept away one fourth of the inhabitants of Europe, or 25,000,000 people !

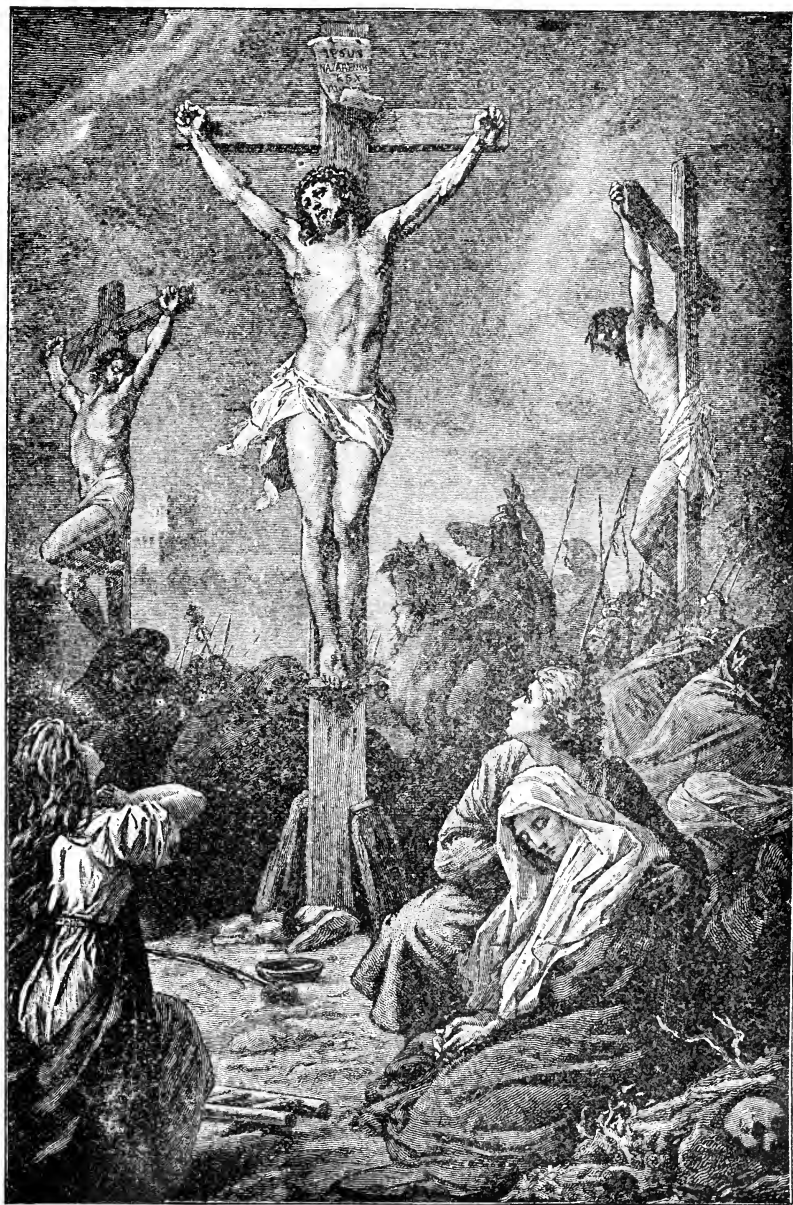
PERSECUTION AND FALSE PROPHETS.

VERSES 9, 10 : "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Here is a brief description of the afflictions and martyrdom of the church of Christ. Thousands of the faithful followers of Jesus were most cruelly put to death by pagan Rome ; yet the prophecy doubtless applies more particularly to the long period of papal persecutions, in which not less than fifty millions of Christians were put to death in the most cruel manner that wicked men and demons could devise. In these verses we are brought down over the long period of the martyrdom of the church of Jesus Christ, to near the present generation. These verses being parallel with verses 21 and 22, this subject will be noticed again.

VERSE 11 : "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."

A true prophet is one who speaks for God. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Rev. 19 : 10. It is Jesus Christ speaking through human lips or pen to his people. *Pseudo*, or false prophets, speak through the agency of wicked spirits and the power of Satan. Their work is to deceive. And while this is true of those who are under



the direct inspiration of superior beings, good or evil, it is true in a more restricted sense that consecrated teachers of divine truth may be regarded as God's prophets; and teachers of error may properly be called false prophets. True and false prophets may be known.

The prophets of God are teachers of purity, reprovers of sin, and faithful in warning the people of coming dangers. The duties of those whom God calls to speak in his great name are clearly expressed by the sacred writers. We here quote from three of them : —

ISA. 58 : 1 : "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

JOEL 2 : 1 : "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand."

2 TIM. 4 : 1, 2 : "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

False prophets do not reprove the people for their sins, and do not warn them of coming danger; but they proclaim peace to the sinner. Their teachings lead from God and his word, and are such as please the unconverted mind. The inspired writers have also spoken definitely of the testimony and work of false prophets. We here give several for example : —

EZE. 13 : 9, 10 : "And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies. They shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God. Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar."

JER. 6 : 13, 14 : "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

JER. 14 : 13, 14 : "Then said I, Ah, Lord God ! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine ; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither spake unto them."

After stating the duty of the faithful servant of God to preach the word, to reprove, to rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, the apostle says :—

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4 : 3, 4.

That time has now fully come. The people choose pleasing fables, which do not disturb them in their sins, rather than the reproving, searching declarations of the word of God. They love to be deceived by the teachings of false prophets, and "say to the seers, See not ; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." Isa. 30 : 10.

"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ; and my people love to have it so ; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5 : 29-31.

The ears of the people are filled with the pleasing fables of the world's conversion, a good time coming, and that we are just entering the golden age. The threatenings of God's word on the proud, the haughty, the vain, the rich, the sinners in Zion, and those out of Zion, are kept back by

the false teachers of these times. Many of them even dare to teach that the moral code of the ten commandments is abrogated. And as the result of such a course, and of such teaching, we see in the professed church of Jesus Christ, that

INIQUITY ABOUNDS.

VERSE 12 : "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

It is evident that both the abounding of iniquity and the waxing cold of the love of many, are fulfilled in the professed church of Jesus Christ. Men must first experience the love of God and of heavenly things before that love can grow cold. Hence, common, unconverted sinners are not here referred to as apostatizing. And, again, the prevalence of iniquity in the unconverted world alone, would stimulate the church to greater diligence, and more godliness, instead of being a cause of apostasy. Hence, the iniquity here mentioned is in the very heart of the professed church, diffusing its chilling influence through the whole body. As the result, the love of many has grown cold. With this, agree the words of the apostle :—

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ; from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3 : 1-5.

Here is a catalogue of eighteen sins, all resting upon those having a form of godliness. These are not infidels and common worldly sinners, for they have not a form of godliness ; but they are men and women professing to be



followers of Jesus Christ. And although they make a profession of piety as high as heaven, these very sins lie at their doors. And by reason of their example, and their chilling influence, many are led from the humble path to heaven, and their love waxes cold.

THE END.

VERSE 13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

As before noted, the word *end*, whenever used in this chapter, refers to the end of the age, and to nothing else. It is the end associated in the New Testament with the second appearing of Jesus Christ. If it be urged that the word "end" has reference to the close of mortal life, then we reply that the disciples did not ask their Lord (see verse 3) when they should die; but "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Neither does the Lord speak of death, when he says (see verse 6), "But the end is not yet." And it would be strange indeed to suppose that the word "end" (verse 14) meant death. If any think such a position admissible, let them read it into the text, as follows: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall death come. Absurdity!

VERSE 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

This is the first sign of the end given by our Lord in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

But it is robbed of its distinct power by that interpretation, sometimes given, by which it is assumed that all men will receive the gospel and be converted, and that then

instead of the end, there will ensue a thousand years in which all shall know the Lord. After this long period of peace and safety, the end will come. How much is assumed on this text will appear when we consider that the text does not say that every individual will even hear this gospel of the kingdom. It does not state that any one will be converted and made holy by it. And we find it far from intimating that the world will be converted and remain so one thousand years. We have no reason to conclude that greater measure of success is implied in this text than that which has always attended the preaching of the gospel. While a few have believed and received it, the great mass of men have passed it by unheedingly. The text simply states: First, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world;" second, "For a witness unto all nations;" third, "And *then* [not one thousand years later, but *THEN*] shall the end come."

But to what does the term "gospel of the kingdom" refer? The query sometimes rises as to whether the gospel in the common acceptation of the word, or a gospel peculiarly related to the second coming of Christ is here meant. No such distinction is to be drawn. There neither is, has been, nor will be more than one gospel. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1 : 8.

The gospel, then, in this instance, is the same as Paul preached, which was the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But in Rev. 14 : 6 and 7 we read : —

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud

voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters."

The gospel is here called the "everlasting gospel," and must necessarily be referred to the gospel of Christ. In connection with the preaching of that gospel, was the proclamation that the judgment hour had come. Not that this message was appended to the gospel, but the angel who had the everlasting gospel to preach said, "Fear God . . . for the hour of his judgment is come."

The gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth relating to salvation. The warnings, counsel, invitations, promises, precepts, prophecies, or whatever the Lord would have the people hear, — the gospel embraces them all. In the days of Noah, the gospel included repentance, faith, obedience, with the promises of grace and mercy; it also included the warning of the impending judgment. And the only way to escape that judgment was through the gospel. So here in Revelation we have the gospel with all it implies, including the message of Christ's second coming and kingdom and the judgment. Closely associated with this message are two others as given in Rev. 14: 8-12. The first is merged into these. Then immediately following their proclamation we have the following scene:—

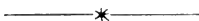
"And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. . . . And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Rev. 14: 14-16.

In Rev. 14: 6-16, then, we learn what is the meaning of the term "gospel of the kingdom." It is *the* gospel, and it embraces the admonitions and instructions relative to the second coming of Christ. And now that we have reached that time, the complete gospel embraces the good

news of the coming kingdom with appropriate warnings and teachings. Our Saviour says it "shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." The Revelator says the message is to be preached "to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." When this shall be done, the end will come.

The world-wide proclamation of the soon coming of Christ was inaugurated about 1832. Since that time, the work of extending its warning voice has gone on. A most remarkable feature of this movement is the fact that in different countries individuals were moved upon, almost simultaneously, to study the prophecies and proclaim the nearness of the end, although they knew nothing of what was being done by others. In the United States and Canada, in Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and in Asia, a profound interest in this subject was created, and people were led to expect the early appearance of Jesus. Since that time clearer light has appeared in connection with the other messages of Revelation 14, and still the work is onward. Wherever the light of the Bible has penetrated, the good news of the coming Saviour is now going. Not only so, but messengers bearing this gracious warning are rapidly finding their way into the dark portions of the earth. Evidence of its extent and progress might be expressed in facts and figures, but the rapid development of the work would soon leave these in the rear. Let it suffice to say that at present the everlasting gospel is being preached and published in all the leading languages and countries of the world. The work has encircled the globe. It is rapidly reaching every nation. We now wait for the approaching end; for when the purpose of God in the proclamation of the coming reign of Christ shall be fully accomplished, then the end will come.

Thus far in this discourse Jesus has passed over the entire Christian dispensation. Beginning with a warning against the deceptions that were to succeed his own times, he next describes wars and disasters, persecutions, apostasy, the perils of the last days, and closes with a distinct sign of the end.

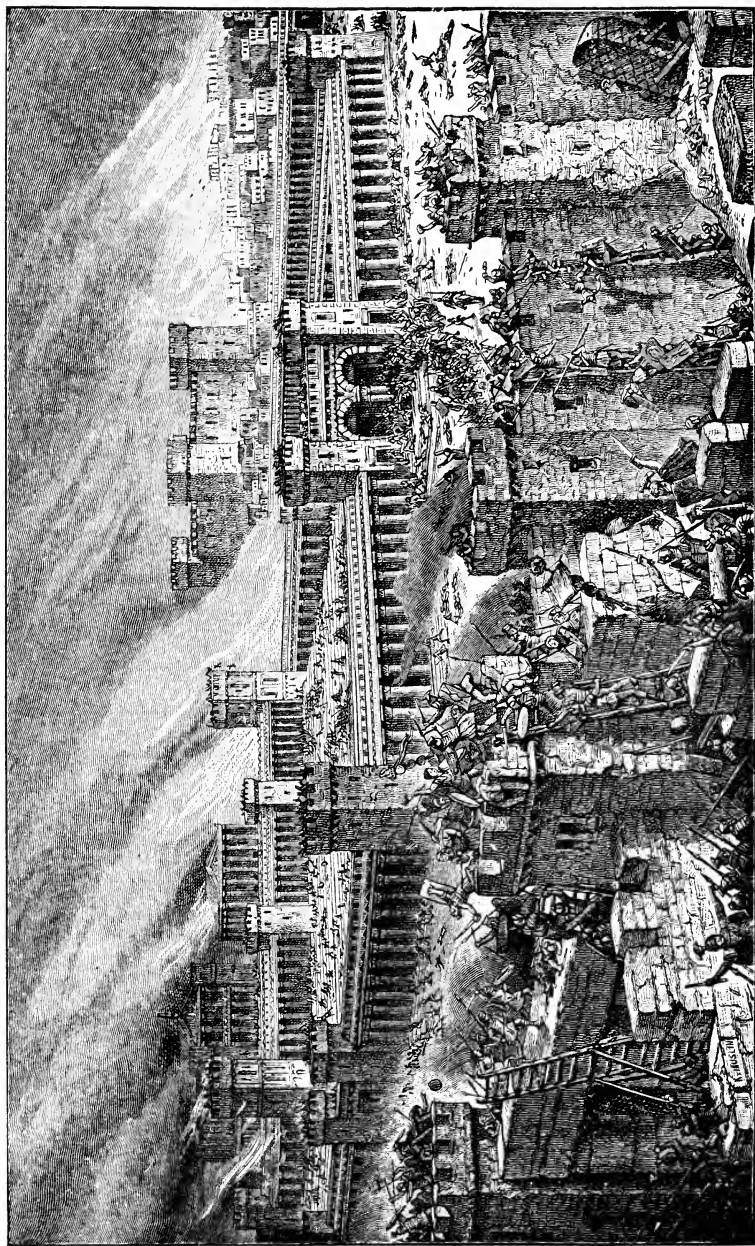


WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE ?

VERSES 15-20 : "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) ; then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains ; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house ; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."

Our Lord having in verses 5-14, passed over the important events in the Christian age down to the end, goes back and introduces in verse 15 the destruction of Jerusalem, in answer to the inquiry, "When shall these things be?" Luke's version of this language is, "When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21 : 20. By this we know that the term "abomination of desolation" refers to the Roman army. This desolating power is spoken of by Daniel as follows : —

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. . . . And for the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Margin, "desolator." Dan. 9 : 26, 27.



DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS.

Here is a clear prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. Our Lord referred to the book of Daniel, and taught his disciples to read and understand it; and when they should see take place what was there predicted, they must make their escape.

It would seem to be impracticable to flee from a city after it was encompassed with armies; but our Saviour did not speak at random. Josephus tells us that Cestius, the Roman general who first led the attack upon Jerusalem, became dismayed at the apparent forces and strength of the city, and after having surrounded the city raised the siege. The historian says: "He retired from the city, without any reason in the world."—*"Wars," book ii, chap. xix.* And in the first words of the succeeding chapter he further states: "After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink."

Dr. A. Clarke, commenting on verse 16, says:—

"This counsel was remembered and wisely followed by the Christians afterwards. Eusebius and Epiphanius say, that at this juncture, after Cestius Gallus had raised the siege, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem and fled to Pella, and other places beyond Jordan."

The flight of the Christians of Judea to the mountains would be attended with difficulties. And their subsequent condition would be that of hardship and suffering. The Lord knew this, and gave them the instructions and warnings necessary. The statement of verse 19 was given to save them from the sorrows of unnecessary woe. That was a time of trouble.

Jesus recognizes the existence of the Sabbath, in verse 20, as late as the destruction of Jerusalem, as verily as he does the seasons of the year. *The Sabbath, is the uniform*

term of both Testaments to designate the very day on which Jehovah rested after the creation, the day upon which he put his blessing, and which he set apart for man. Not only in this instance does our Saviour show his regard for the sacred day of rest, but in his life he kept it (see Luke 4:16); in his teaching he upheld it, and taught its true character (Matt. 12:12); and when he lay in the tomb, the devout women reverently rested "according to the commandment." He himself is Lord of the Sabbath, and he declares that it was made for man. Mark 2:27, 28. Jesus does not speak of the Sabbath as being only a seventh part of time, or one day in seven, and no day in particular. The Sabbath is the term used, referring to the last day of the first week of time, and to the last day of each subsequent week.

It is thus that Jesus answered the question, "When shall these things be?" He now proceeds to answer the second great question.



WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING?

VERSE 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

It is not surprising, perhaps, that upon a casual reading some should conclude that this verse had its fulfillment at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. It was a time of great suffering, and the verse follows so closely those which relate to the destruction of the city, that this explanation suggests itself readily enough. But for good reasons we cannot accept that application of this verse. Jesus is giving a

continuous prophecy. The narrative proceeds from verse to verse along the line of the entire dispensation.

The "great tribulation" mentioned in verse 21 is that of the church of Christ, and not the tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem. We offer the following reasons for so deciding :—

1. It is a fact that the tribulation of the Christian church, especially under the reign of the papacy, was greater than God's people had suffered before "since the beginning of the world." The tribulation of the Christian church has been greater than it will ever be again. True, a time of trouble "such as never was," spoken of in Dan. 12:1, is coming *upon the wicked*; but we find in the same verse this blessed promise, "And at that time thy people shall be delivered." The tribulation of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem was not greater than the world will ever witness. The vials of Jehovah's unmingled wrath are yet to be poured out, not upon the people of one nation only, but upon the guilty people of all nations.

"The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried." Jer. 25:33.

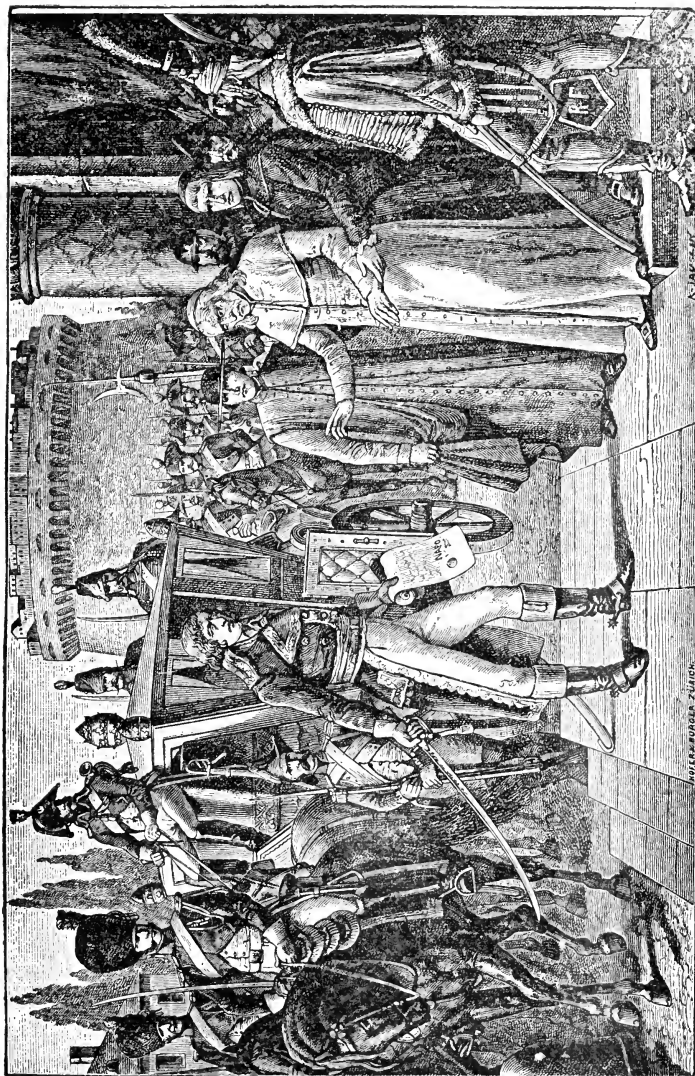
2. If the tribulation be applied to the Jews, or to any other class of unbelieving men, it cannot be harmonized with Dan. 12:1, which speaks of the time of trouble such as never was, when Michael shall stand up. Certainly there cannot be two times of trouble at different periods, greater than ever was or ever would be. Therefore the "tribulation" spoken of in Matt. 24:21, 29, applies not to the Jews, but to the church of Christ, extending through the 1260 years of papal persecution; and the "trouble" mentioned in Dan. 12:1, to the unbelieving world, to be experienced by them in the future.



3. The period of tribulation was shortened for the elect's sake. This cannot refer to the Jews, for their house had been pronounced desolate. They were left of God in their hardness of heart and blindness of mind. Says Paul, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The elect were the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. And where were they when tribulation was upon the Jews?—They had fled to the mountains. It is absurd, then, to say that the days of tribulation of the Jews in the city of Jerusalem, were shortened for the sake of the elect, who had fled from the place of tribulation. Moreover the tribulation that came upon Jerusalem was not restrained or modified, but continued until the city was destroyed and its people were given to the sword and to captivity.

4. The connection between verses 20 and 21 shows that the tribulation was to commence with those Christians who were to flee out of the city. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day; for then shall be great tribulation." Our Lord here speaks of the tribulation which his people would suffer from the time of their flight onward. We follow them in their flight to the mountains, and then pass along down through the noted persecutions of the church of God under pagan Rome, and we see, indeed, *tribulation*. And when we come to the period of papal persecutions, we see them suffering the most cruel tortures, and dying the most dreadful deaths that wicked men and demons could inflict. This last period is especially noted in prophecy.

The prophet Daniel saw the papacy, its blasphemy, its ignorance, its work of death on the saints, and its duration as a persecuting power, under the symbol of the little horn.



TAKING THE POPE PRISONER.— 1798.

“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Dan. 7 : 25.

It is generally admitted that “a time and times and the dividing of time” is 1260 years. The proof of it may readily be seen by comparing Rev. 12 : 14, 6 ; 13 : 5, with the scripture just quoted. In these passages we learn that “time, times, and the dividing of time” is equivalent to a thousand two hundred and threescore days, which equals three and one half Biblical years, or “forty and two months.” Applying the scriptural rule of interpretation, a day for a year (Eze. 4 : 6), we have 1260 years.

This period is to cover the supremacy of the papacy. The beginning of it will be the point of the establishment of the power of the papacy. This was the year 538 A. D. Justinian, emperor of Rome, with his capital at Constantinople, espoused the cause of the bishop of Rome; and in 533 A. D. issued a decree which constituted that prelate head of all the churches. But the Arian Ostrogoths had possession of Rome, and it was not until they had been rooted up that the city was accessible to the bishop. This was accomplished in 538, by Belisarius, Justinian’s celebrated general. For a concise and clear account of this occurrence we refer the reader to the “Two Republics,” by A. T. Jones, pp. 551–553.

Commencing the 1260 years A. D. 538, they reach to A. D. 1798, when Berthier, a French general, took possession of Rome. The pope was made a prisoner and carried with violence away from his palace and out of Italy. The papacy was stripped of its civil power. Here ended the days of tribulation spoken of by our Lord, which were —

SHORTENED FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE.

VERSE 22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The papacy was clothed with civil power to punish heretics, which it held for 1260 years; and had not the period of tribulation of the elect in the providence of God been shortened, the martyrdom of the church would have continued to 1798, in which event, no flesh of the elect would have been saved. But the Reformation under Martin Luther, and those associated with this great reformer, modified this tribulation, and continued to restrain the rage and power of the papacy until the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, since which time, there has been no general persecution waged against the church. Thus we are brought in this prophetic discourse of our Lord, down into the eighteenth century, very near the present time. We would naturally expect, then, that the instructions and warnings which follow would be applicable to this generation.

LO, HERE, AND LO, THERE.

VERSES 23-27: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

In these verses the great theme of Christ's second coming is again vividly brought forth. Satan is ever on the alert to contravene by some device or art, the work of God. His most successful plan is to deceive. By this means he gains ready access to all such as desire to evade the force of

truth. And having deceived an individual, he not only prevents his salvation, but gains to himself an adherent if not an active agent. So, as the time for the second advent draws near, the enemy becomes particularly active, knowing that he hath but a short time. In the words last quoted our Lord seeks to prepare the minds of his people for the deceptions that are to be practiced upon those who live near the time of his second coming. There will be those who will cry, "Lo, here; or Lo, there," some will even claim to be Christ. They will purport to represent the truth in regard to Christ's coming in various plausible or fanatical ways. Others, in order to reach other minds, will present theories of human device accounting for the advent of Christ in various so-called rational schemes. Many sincere people will be led to expect the conversion of the world through a millennium of peace. Others will be persuaded that the coming of Christ means death. And even false prophets, showing great signs and wonders, will appear. All these form an atmosphere of deception, the miasma of which will stupefy, if it were possible, the elect of God.

In this fearful work will be engaged the notorious deceiver, the trained agents of Satan, the worldly philosopher, worldly preachers, popular ministers, critics of the Bible, and many whose eyes do not discern the signs of the times. The Mormons call the people to the desert; Spiritualism invites us to the secret chamber, where Satanic signs and wonders are wrought to captivate the mind and divert it from the truth. Of these "false prophets" Paul speaks in 1 Tim. 4:1:—

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

In another scripture the apostle places the coming of Christ in connection with —

“The working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thess. 2 : 9-11.

These are some of the deceptions of which Christ is speaking in the text. It is undoubtedly the work of modern Spiritualism. This work, in its present form, originated in the year 1848, and constitutes and is to constitute one of the most prominent signs of the end.

Let no one be deceived by any means. For these are but subterfuges. They are not the coming of Christ. He has said, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” John 14 : 3.

The angels said at his ascension,—

“*This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall *so come in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1 : 11.

Paul tells us,—

“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.” 1 Thess. 4 : 16.

And here our Saviour says :—

“As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

He will come literally, personally, the same Jesus who was here upon the earth. Not in lowly form as an offering for sin, to be set at naught, abused, and crucified, but in “all his glory” attended with “all the holy angels.” Matt. 25 : 31. We shall know when he comes for “every eye shall see him.” Rev. 1 : 7.

None of these evasions of the truth will ever be able to counterfeit the real event. The Roman army did not come to Jerusalem in this way. Death does not come in this way. The deceptive wonders of Spiritualism cannot imitate the glory of Christ's second coming. He will come in power and great glory (verse 30); he will come in the glory of his Father (chapter 16: 27); and in the glory of the holy angels (Luke 9: 26); all the holy angels shall come with him. Matt. 25: 31. His coming will be as glorious and resplendent as the lightning. When Jesus revealed himself to Saul of Tarsus, there was a light above the brightness of the sun (Acts 26: 13); of the angel who appeared at the tomb after the resurrection of Jesus it is said, "His countenance was like lightning" (Matt. 28: 3); and Ezekiel says of the messengers of the Most High, they "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." Eze. 1: 14.

When Jesus comes in the glory of his Father, with so glorious a train attendant, his coming will indeed be as the lightning coming out of the east and shining to the west, and no one will have any more occasion or opportunity to say to his fellow, "See here," than one would have to call another to behold a gleam of lightning flashing through the heavens. The vivid lightning flashing out of the distant east, and shining even to the west, lights up the whole heavens. What, then, when the Lord comes in flaming glory, and all the holy angels with him? The presence of only one holy angel at the sepulcher where Christ lay dead, caused the Roman guard to shake, and become as dead men. The light and glory of one angel completely overpowered those strong sentinels. The Son of man is coming in his own kingly glory, and in the glory of his Father, attended by all the holy angels. Then the

whole heavens will blaze with glory, and the whole earth will tremble before him.

THE SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING.

VERSES 29-31: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

We have before seen that our Lord speaks in this chapter of the long period of tribulation that was to come upon his followers, and we have also seen how those days of tribulation were shortened for the elect's sake. Christ says that the sun should be darkened immediately after the tribulation of those days. Mark in his gospel, gives it as follows :—

"In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark 13 : 24.

This makes the time in which the sun was to be darkened more distinct and definite. The days of tribulation were the 1260 years of papal supremacy, beginning in 538 A. D. and ending with the capture of Rome and the pope by the French in 1798. But we have already seen that the "tribulation" or persecution of those days was "shortened" for the elect's sake. That is, the active persecution of the church by papal power ceased in 1773. Then, according to Mark's statement, the sun should be darkened between that date and 1798. It was fulfilled. May 19, 1780, has passed into history as "the dark day."

This is a fact of so general knowledge that we need not consume space in elucidating it. A few references to undoubted authorities will suffice.

Noah Webster's dictionary, in the edition for 1869, under the head of Explanatory and Pronouncing Vocabulary of Noted Names, says : —

“ *The dark day, May 19, 1780* — so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent ; fowls went to roost ; cattle sought the barn-yard ; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the south-west and the north-east. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known.”

From another good authority we quote : —

“ A solemn gloom of unusual darkness before ten o'clock,—a still darker cloud rolling under the sable curtain from the north and west before eleven o'clock,—excluded the light so that none could see to read or write in the House, even at either window, or distinguish persons at a small distance, or perceive any distinction of dress in the circle of attendants ; wherefore, at eleven o'clock adjourned the House till two in the afternoon.”—*Journal of the Connecticut House of Representatives, Friday, May 19, 1780.*

Herschel, the great astronomer, says : —

“The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.”

A contemporary paper contained the following : —

“ During the whole time a sickly, melancholy gloom overcast the face of nature. Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day, for notwithstanding there was almost a

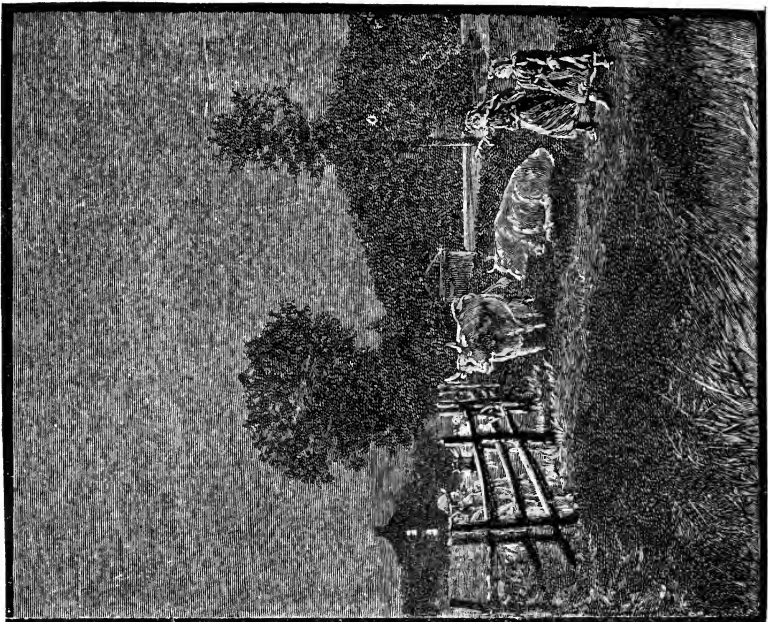


[46]

MORNING.

THE DARK DAY OF MAY 19, 1780.

MID-DAY.



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full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to its rays. This unusual phenomenon excited the fears and apprehensions of many people."—*Mass. Spy, Correspondence, 1780.*

From another good authority we take the following :—

"Almost, if not altogether alone as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind in nature's diversified range of events during the last century, stands the dark day of May 19, 1780, a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England, which brought intense alarm and distress to multitudes of minds, as well as dismay to the brute creation, the fowls fleeing, bewildered, to their roosts, and the birds to their nests, and the cattle returning to their stalls. Indeed thousands of the good people of that day became fully convinced that the end of all things terrestrial had come ; many gave up, for the time, their secular pursuits, and betook themselves to religious devotions."—" *Our First Century.*"

An extract from a sermon preached at that time will be of interest :—

"But especially I mention that *wonderful darkness* on the 19th of May inst. [1780]. Then, as in our text, the sun was darkened ; such a darkness as probably was never known before since the crucifixion of our Lord. People left their work in the house and in the field. Travelers stopped ; schools broke up at eleven o'clock ; people lighted candles at noonday ; and the fire shone as at night. Some people, I have been told, were in dismay, and thought whether the day of Judgment was not drawing on. A great part of the following night also was singularly dark. *The moon, though in the full, gave no light*, as in our text."—*From a manuscript sermon by Rev. Elam Potter, delivered May 28, 1780.*

By the remarkable obscuration of the moon on the following night, the next sign, "And the moon shall not give her light," was fulfilled. Concerning this it is only necessary to insert a few words :—

"The night succeeding that day (May 19, 1780) was of such pitchy darkness that, in some instances, horses could not be compelled to leave the stable when wanted for service. About midnight, the clouds were dispersed, and the moon and stars appeared with unimpared brilliancy." — "*Stone's History of Beverly*."

Mr. Tenny, of Exeter, N. H., quoted by Mr. Gage, to the Historical Society, speaking of the dark day and dark night of May 19, 1780, says:—

"The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eye was equally invisible with the blackest velvet."

Concerning a similar phenomenon in the Old World a reliable work says:—

"Three years later, and Europe with its teeming millions went under as mysterious a cloud, which, though not so dense, yet continued longer and awoke a wonder and fear that was widely felt. A haze, for which no known cause was then assigned (though in subsequent years it has been supposed by some to have been volcanic dust), spread through the entire breadth of the atmosphere over all the continent far into Asia. It appeared in Denmark, May 29, reached France, June 14; Italy, June 16; Norway, June 22; Austria and Switzerland, June 23; Sweden, June 24; and Russia, June 25. By the close of the month it had overspread like a pall all Syria, and on July 18, had penetrated the heart of Asia to the Altai Mountains. The obscurity prevailed a greater portion of the summer, imparting to the sun an unnatural color of a dull, rusty red, and causing both the days and nights to wear a weird and gloomy aspect. The atmosphere was highly electric, and nature was greatly convulsed.

"Dr. N. Webster in his valuable 'History of Pestilences,' vol. ii. p. 274, testifies to the general fear. As it was in America on the occurrence of the 'dark day,' so the churches in Europe were crowded with alarmed multitudes supplicating mercy of Heaven. Professor Lalande,

the astronomer of France, attempted to quiet the popular fear by ascribing the darkened heavens to exhalations arising out of the earth ; but both Webster and Humboldt (*Cosmos* IV., p. 75) rejected this solution of the mysterious obscurity. Protestant England shared in the alarm it occasioned ; and the poet Cowper sang that all the elements ‘preached the general doom.’ It was to this unaccountable obscuration of light that he refers in his ‘Task:’—

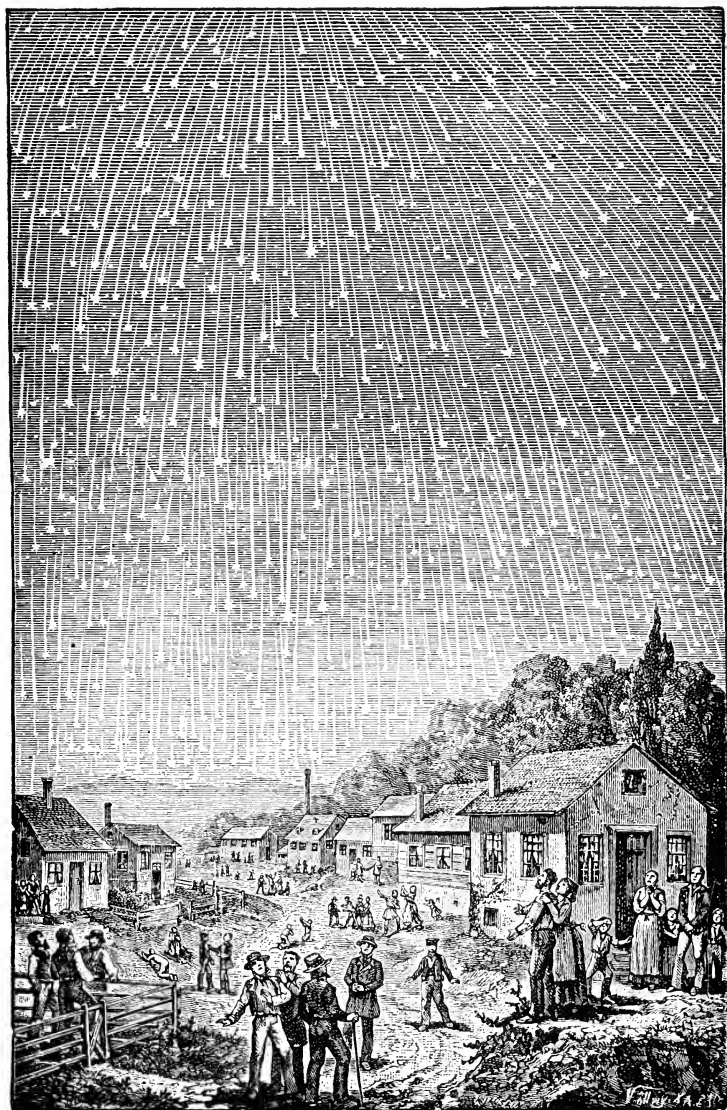
“ ‘Nature seems with dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all.’ ”

—“ *Great Consummation.*”

“AND THE STARS SHALL FALL.”

How this sign can be fulfilled is a query with some people, who, perhaps captiously, remark that it would be impossible, since the earth itself is but a small body compared with many of the vast worlds of space. But all such queries are out of date now since the sign itself has already been witnessed. On the night of November 13, 1833, the grandest display of celestial fireworks ever beheld took place. From works of accepted authority we take the following descriptions of this remarkable event :—

“But the most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars, of which the world has furnished any record, was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. The entire extent of this astonishing exhibition has not been precisely ascertained ; but it covered no inconsiderable portion of the earth’s surface. . . . The first appearance was that of fireworks of the most imposing grandeur, covering the entire vault of heaven with myriads of fire-balls, resembling sky-rockets. Their coruscations were bright, gleaming, and incessant, and they fell thick as the flakes in the early snows of December. To the splendors of this celestial exhibition the most brilliant sky-rockets and fire-works of art bear less relation than the twinkling of the most tiny star to the broad glare of the sun. The whole heavens seemed in motion, and suggested to some the awful grandeur of the image employed in the Apocalypse, upon the opening of the sixth seal, when ‘the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even



as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' "— *Burritt's "Geography of the Heavens,"* p. 163, ed. 1854.

A celebrated astronomer and meteorologist, says :—

"Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of Nov. 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fire-works that has ever been since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history.

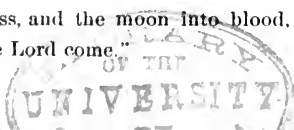
"In nearly all places the meteors began to attract notice by their unusual frequency as early as eleven o'clock, and increased in numbers and splendor until about four o'clock, from which time they gradually declined, but were visible until lost in the light of day. The meteors did not fly at random over all parts of the sky, but appeared to emanate from a point in the constellation Leo, near a star called Gamma Leonis, in the bend of the Sickle. . . .

"The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no considerable part of the earth's surface, from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance. This is no longer to be regarded as a terrestrial but a celestial phenomenon, and shooting stars are now to be no more viewed as casual productions of the upper regions of the atmosphere, but as *visitants from other worlds*, or from the planetary voids."— *Prof. Olmstead, of Yale College.*

"No philosopher or scholar has told or recorded an event, I suppose, like that of yesterday morning. A prophet 1800 years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble of understanding stars falling to mean falling stars; or '*hoi asteres tou ouranou epesan eis teen geen,*' in the only sense in which it is possible to be literally true."— *Henry Dana Ward, in Journal of Commerce, Nov. 14, 1833.*

Not only here in Matthew 24 is attention directed to these signs as premonitory of the coming of Christ. The Lord through the prophet Joel says :—

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come."





EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON.

Under the sixth seal, as given in Rev. 6:12-17, we have the following language :—

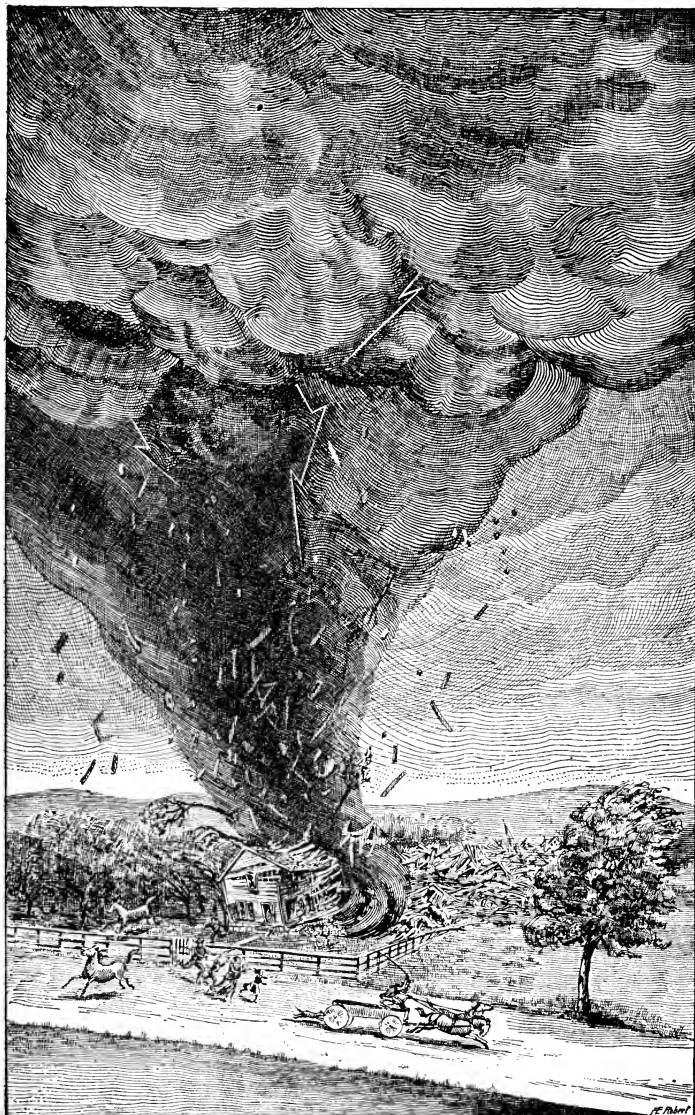
“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

That the fourth and fifth seals apply to the papal persecution there can be no reasonable doubt. If so, then the great earthquake with which the sixth seal opens would be that of Lisbon, in 1755, which agitated the greater part of the earth and destroyed many thousands of lives, 60,000 in Lisbon alone.

The darkening of the sun and moon follows in 1780, and the falling of the stars in 1833. Consequently the next event which we are to expect under this seal is the departing of the heavens as a scroll. This being future, we may say that we are living between the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of Revelation 6.

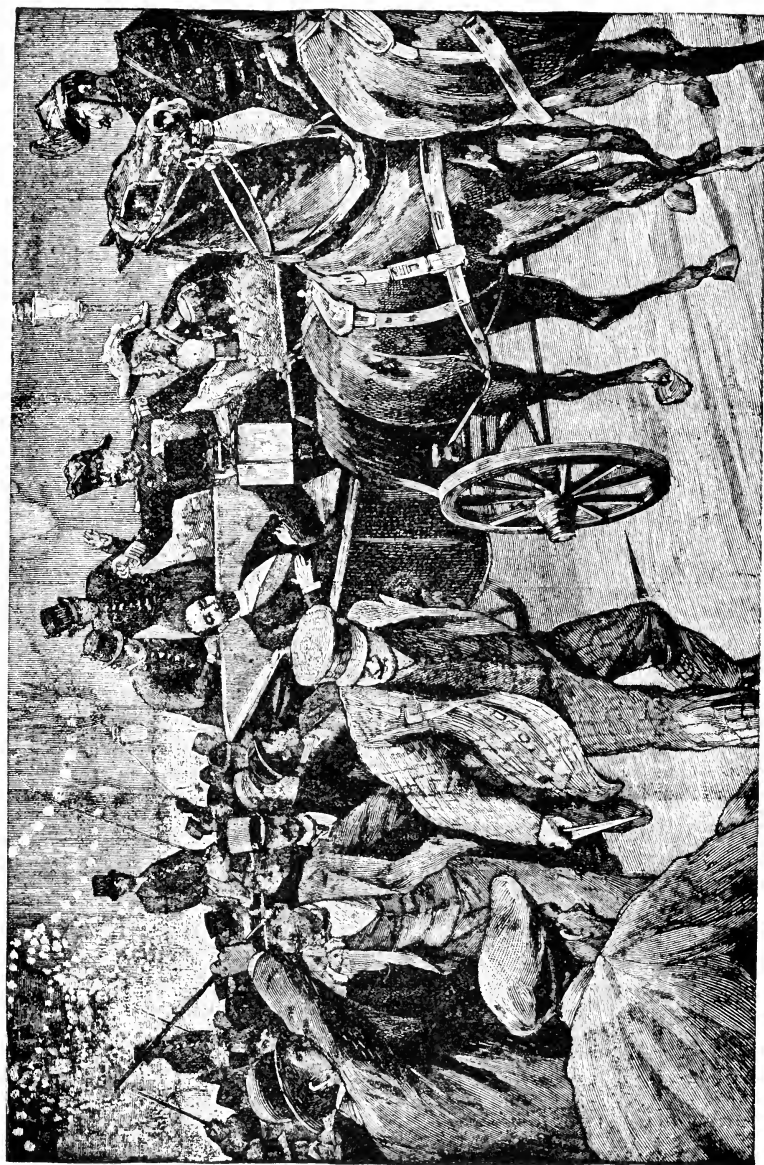
In the gospel as written by Luke, however, we have at this point some additional specifications given, which are of such interest at the present juncture. And they rightfully belong to this exposition, since both Matthew and Luke are giving versions of the same discourse. The passage from Luke to which reference is made is the following :—

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Luke 21:25-27.



The signs in the sun, moon, and stars are here spoken of less specifically than by Matthew, while other features of the times, which Matthew does not notice, are introduced between those signs and the shaking of the powers of heaven. These are of peculiar interest to us because we are living in the very days when the things that Luke speaks of are coming to pass. The signs here predicted consist of violent commotions upon earth which cause anxiety, perplexity, and distress among nations and in the hearts of men. We may refer the expression, "the sea and the waves roaring," to unusual disturbances of the natural elements, and we have the most abundant evidences of its fulfillment in the storms and convulsions of nature that are occurring by sea and land, filling the heart with dread at the sight of every dark cloud that arises. The tidal waves and volcanic upheavals at sea have, in the last two or three decades, been marked with extraordinary violence. On land, cyclones and earthquakes have carried on a fearful work of destruction. Many instances might be cited to substantiate this statement, but the events are too familiar to require it. Hardly a week passes but some great calamity of this kind is recorded.

But the expression referred to is probably susceptible of another application in which it will be found to be as forcible and pertinent to the present state of affairs as in the one just noticed. This would be to give the term "sea and waves" its symbolic meaning. The prophet of old said: "And behold the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea." Dan. 7 : 2. We are told that the sea represents "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Rev. 17 : 15. Taking the words in this sense, the meaning and fulfillment are still as apparent as before ; and the expression joins its force to that of the remainder of the passage — "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity;



the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." In this sense the expression in question would indicate commotion and violent disturbance in the social and political world. In this meaning all will at once see the vivid force of the text as applied to our times.

The times we live in are anomalous to any that have ever preceded us. For some years there have been universal and active preparations for war, and almost universal peace. To secure the greatest efficiency of armed forces for defensive and offensive purposes, has been the prime consideration of government, especially so, as far as the Old World nations are concerned. Europe echoes to the tread of vast hosts of war while the nations are driven to their wits' end to provide for their support. It is well known that these costly preparations are not for show ; and the hearts of men quail in view of the culmination which, though delayed, must soon be reached.

But while the temple of Janus is closed as far as international strife is concerned, and angel hands are holding the winds of war (see Rev. 7 : 1-3), internal strife and dissension are rending the vitals of the great nations of earth. Within the confines of its own border, each of these nations is cherishing elements of the deadliest nature. Trouble is brewing that has for the people far more terror than foreign complications. For some time the ominous mutterings of an on-coming storm have been heard in every land, and it requires no remarkable acumen to discern the rapid approach of the crisis.

The apostle James strikes directly at the matter in a prophetic glance and exhortation in the following language :—

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered ; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton ; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just ; and he doth not resist you.” James 5 : 1-6.

The apostle locates the circumstances he here refers to in the last days. He denounces the rich men who have heaped together treasures, the rust and canker of which will be a witness against them. They live in pleasure and wantonness while the cries of those whose wages they have kept back enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts.

There is a universal cry of hard times in all the world. It is hard to obtain money ; and yet, there never was so much money as at present. But it is being collected — gathered in heaps — by the powerful few, while the limited means of the masses are dwindling lower and lower. The poorer classes witness the absorption of -wealth by the money-kings, with feelings that are being aroused to the point of desperation by the sense of their inability to secure what seems to them a more equitable distribution of the things of this world. The laborers cry, and God hears their cry.

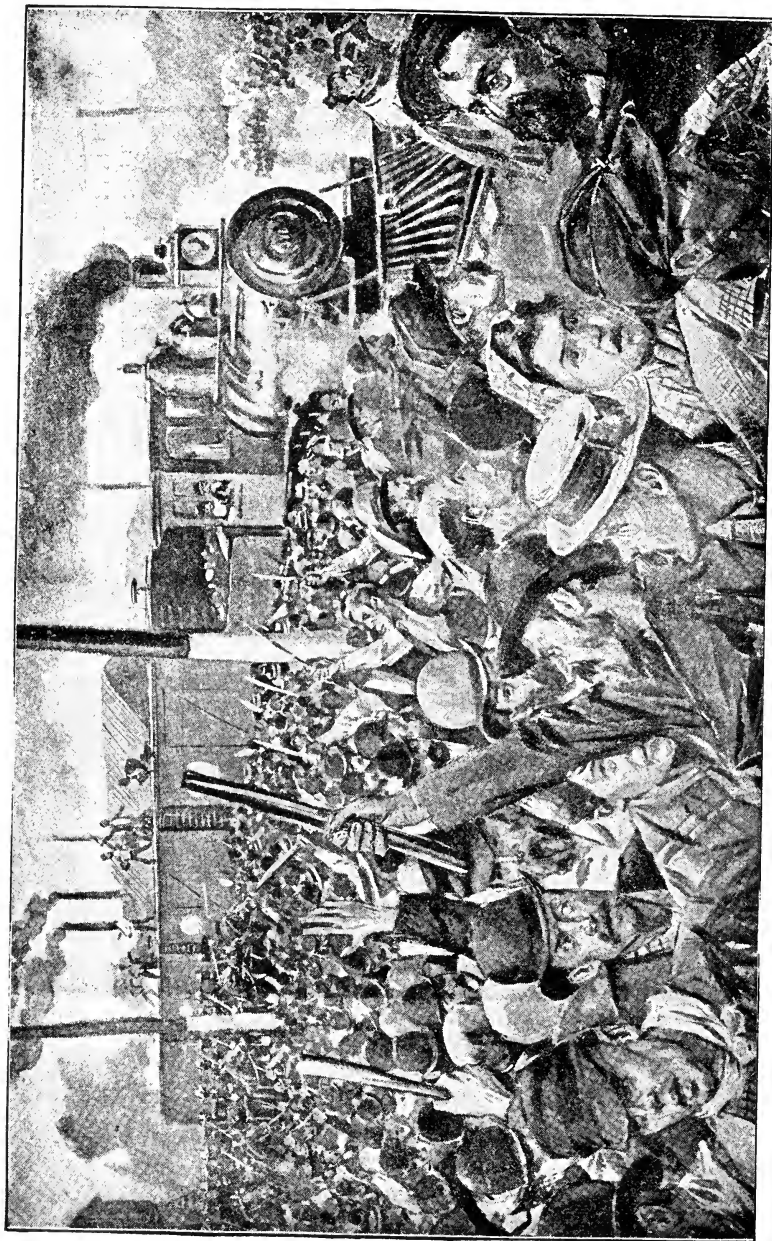
That these things are taking place to-day as the most prominent feature of our social life no one will for a moment deny. Such colossal fortunes the world has heretofore at most but dreamed of. There are men living to-day who have risen in wealth from obscure stations to become lords

of untold millions. Their wealth passes the bounds of just computation, for it includes the power of oppression by which it may be indefinitely increased. The lavish expenditure of these means for selfish pleasure often amounts to wantonness.

Well then, what is to be done? It is a difficult and delicate matter to frame and secure legislation by which this or any other class of men shall be deprived of the management of their own business as long as that business is legitimate and is legitimately conducted. Shall anarchy and violence be resorted to? Shall the laborer seize the torch and the weapons of death? Shall the country be devastated by strikes, strife, and civil war? Shall our communities be rent with murder, arson, treason, and intense personal hatred and enmity? No one possessing the natural instincts of humanity could contemplate such a condition of affairs except with horror. There are ghouls of society who gloat in blood; but such are not true citizens, they are not neighbors, they certainly are not Christians.

But what shall we do as citizens, neighbors, and Christians? This is a question of great importance just now. Inspiration long ago foresaw our situation. The pitying Saviour long since anticipated the sufferings that are to come upon this generation; and having, through his servant, outlined the present condition of affairs so closely, he certainly would not leave his followers uninformed as to the course he would have them pursue. We have to read only two verses farther in James's letter to find the counsel we need.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye



also patient ; stablish your hearts ; *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" James 5 : 7, 8.

Oppression and revolt, combination and intrigue, strife and bloodshed, never will cease until the supreme selfishness, which in the absence of divine grace controls all men, gives place to true philanthropy, and a brotherhood that is not outlined by class or sectional interests. This happy time is coming. When Jesus comes, he will take to himself his power and reign in righteousness. Then will the hills be brought low, the valleys exalted, the crooked be made straight, and the rough places smooth.

Those who are weary of strife, those who through misfortune or oppression have been made to feel their need of relief will find rest to their souls in looking for the coming of the Lord. It is vain to match evil with evil or to try to cure wrong with wrong. The gospel of Christ is the only remedy for these ills. And all that we can really do to counteract the annoyances of this life must be done through the gospel of peace. In this time of perplexity, distress, and fear, let every Christian hold up Christ. Let his patient suffering be exemplified in whatever circumstances may come. Just a little beyond, there is relief.

Strikes, boycotts, lock-outs, trusts, unions, or any other human device or demonstration only augments the trouble, as the experience of the past few years shows. For there never was so much of these things as now, and never was capital so insecure, business so uncertain, and labor in such distress as at present. The employment of arbitrary force provokes greater efforts on the opposite side, and thus the breach is widened and the strife becomes more bitter. We do not argue the merits or demerits of the case. That there is deep wrong involved, the fruits plainly show. It is our task only to point out the one remedy available alike to

either and all. That remedy is the gospel of Christ, which is soon to close in a glorious triumph for those who have patiently and faithfully wrought his will.

"THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN."

We do not apprehend that this circumstance will occur as a sign of Christ's coming, but rather that it will constitute one of the events of his coming, the same as the features mentioned in the next verse. An evident distinction may be drawn between the *signs* of the advent and the circumstances of it. With the falling of the stars, the former cease ; and with the next event the latter commence. This event, the shaking of the powers of heaven, we must regard as being future. It holds the same place in the events of this chapter, that the departing of the heavens as a scroll does in the events of the sixth seal of Revelation 6. Both follow the falling stars. The Scriptures plainly teach that, prior to the resurrection of the just by the voice of the Son of God, the voice of God the Father will shake the heavens and the earth, when will be fulfilled the shaking of the powers of the heaven. This is not the voice of the Son of God as he descends to raise the dead. It comes from the throne of God in the temple of heaven.

"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3 : 16.

"Therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." Isa. 13 : 13.

Paul quotes from the words of the Lord by Haggai and comments as follows :—

“Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken.” Heb. 12 : 26, 27.

“SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN.”

Neither is this one of the signs showing that the coming of the Son of man is near, but “the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” It is that which indicates his position. When Christ ascended from the mount of Olivet, “a cloud received him” from the sight of his disciples. They still gazed at the cloud as it rolled upward, bearing the Saviour toward the Father’s throne; but they could not see his person. When he comes “in like manner” as he was taken up to heaven, the cloud will appear, small in the distance, but as it draws near, it will signify to those who are looking for his return, that he is there, and soon his presence will fill the earth with matchless glory. In Rev. 14 : 14, the holy seer records his view of the coming Saviour in the following words: “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man.”

This is not a mass of vapor but a cloud of resplendent glory. He comes “with power and great glory.” He will “come in the glory of his Father” (Matt. 16 : 27); in his own glory, “and all the holy angels with him.” Matt. 25 : 31. The glory of the Father, of the Son, and of all the holy angels—this glory will comprise the cloud which attends him on the way. Of its intensity we can form no just conception. In the presence of one angel the Roman guard “did quake and became as dead men.” There are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of them in this throng. Above the brightness of their glory is that of the Father and the Son.

At first the cloud is only perceptible, but as it approaches, it attracts attention, and at length every eye is fastened intently upon the wonderful spectacle. The trumpet resounds, the voice of the Archangel awakens the dead, and they come forth to share in the glorious revelation of their Redeemer. All nature is convulsed with her coming dissolution. Each moment the glory draws nearer, and soon the wicked can no longer endure the sight.

“And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Verse 30.

Again attention is directed to the parallel language of Rev. 6 : 15–17 : —

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

The prophet Isaiah describes the same thrilling event from the other standpoint—that of the waiting people of God : —

“He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isa. 25 .8, 9.

The apostle Paul gives a vivid description of the event with its attendant circumstances as follows : —

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have

no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4 : 13-17.

The once slighted, insulted, and crucified Saviour, now King of kings and Lord of lords, is coming near the earth! His glory blazes everywhere ! The saints hope and rejoice with trembling. But what an hour for the wicked ! The tribes of the earth mourn. Amid the ruins of shivered creation they hold one general prayer-meeting. Kings and great men, rich men, chief captains and mighty men, free and bond, all, yes, all unite in the general wail. As the Son of man in the glory of his Father, attended by all the holy angels, draws still nearer, consternation fills every breast. They hide in dens and in the rocks of the mountains. Their only hope is to be concealed from the glory of that scene. They know it is too late to pray for mercy, that probation for the human family has ended forever.

But rocks cannot shelter them from the burning glory manifested by the King of kings, attended by the whole heavenly host. When "the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father," "and all the holy angels with him," no sinner can endure the scene and live. The exceeding brightness of that vast multitude of angels, brighter than a thousand suns at noonday, will pierce the sinner's lowest hiding place, and will "make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:18. The Son

of man will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." But before his coming a great work will be done for his people. Should he suddenly burst upon them now, they could not endure "the power and great glory" of the scene. This subject is well illustrated by the following words of the prophet :—

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3.

The morning is a beautiful figure of the opening glory of the day of God. The day-star first appears, then the dawn of day. And as the light of day increases, the eyes are enabled to endure it, and view the sun shining in his strength. But should the light of the sun burst upon the world suddenly at midnight, no human eye could endure it.

So will the people of God be prepared to meet their coming King. They must first break away from the love and cares of this world, and consecrate all to the Lord. Then will they, in due time, share the outpouring of the Holy Spirit "as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth." The day-star will arise in their hearts. 2 Peter 1:19. Those who have taken heed to the sure word of prophecy through the dark, watching night, then raise their heads in triumph. They are filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit. Glory is poured upon them till they can gaze on Christ and angels. The trumpet sounds. The angels are dispatched to the graves of the righteous. The voice of the Son of God awakes the sleeping saints of all ages. They come forth in immortal perfection; and, as they leave the earth, the living saints are changed. The "elect from one end of heaven to the other," each with an angel bright and strong to lead the way; are caught

up to meet the Lord, who waits in mid-heaven to receive the purchase of his blood. As language would fail to describe what follows, we leave the reader to contemplate it, praying that we may be prepared to participate in the meeting scene.

PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE.

VERSES 32, 33: "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things, know that it ["he," R. V.] is near, even at the doors."

This parable is probably the most forcible figure that could be used with which to illustrate this subject. When the trees of the field begin to put forth their leaves, and the tender grass springs up, and the ground is being covered with its green velvet carpet, we know that summer is nigh. It is a certainty with us that summer is coming when we see these signs in nature. We know that summer is nigh "*So, likewise,*" or, with the same certainty, we may *know* that Christ's coming is near when the signs in the sun, moon, and stars are fulfilled. How near?—Even at the doors. How near may that be?

VERSE 34: "Verily I say unto you. This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

It is sometimes claimed that the generation spoken of was the one then living. If so, it could have been to no greater extent than referring to the answer of the question relating to the destruction of Jerusalem. But it would be wholly illogical to limit the application of the statement to that generation or to place its principal significance there. "All these things" must include the signs and circumstances of which Christ has been speaking. In the



preceding verses he gives the parable of the fig-tree, and addresses those who are to be living at that time directly. "So likewise *ye*, when *ye* shall see all these things, *know* that it is near." And then, "*This* generation shall not pass." What generation? Evidently the one which he was addressing, and which saw "these things come to pass." Not only does such an interpretation do no violence to the Saviour's meaning, but it is obviously the only one that can be reasonably entertained in regard to it.

Paul speaks in the first person of those who will be living when Jesus comes, for he says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Cor. 15:51, 52. Or, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thess. 4:17. The things here mentioned by the apostle did not take place in his day. They have not yet taken place. Notwithstanding, he speaks of them as though they would take place in his day, and as if he were to have a part in them.

The proclamation of the coming and kingdom of Christ is given to the last generation. God sent Noah to preach to the last generation before the flood, not to any preceding one. The very generation which was destroyed by the waters of the flood saw Noah build the ark, and heard his warning voice. So God has raised up men to give the solemn warning to the world at the right time to give force to the warning. And the very generation of men that live after the three great signs are fulfilled, and who hear and reject the warning message of Heaven, will drink the cup of the unmingled wrath of God. And those of this very generation who receive the message, suffer disappointments, and endure the trials of the waiting position, will witness

the coming of Christ, and exclaim, "Lo, this is our God ; we have *waited* for him, and he will save us." Isa. 25 : 9.

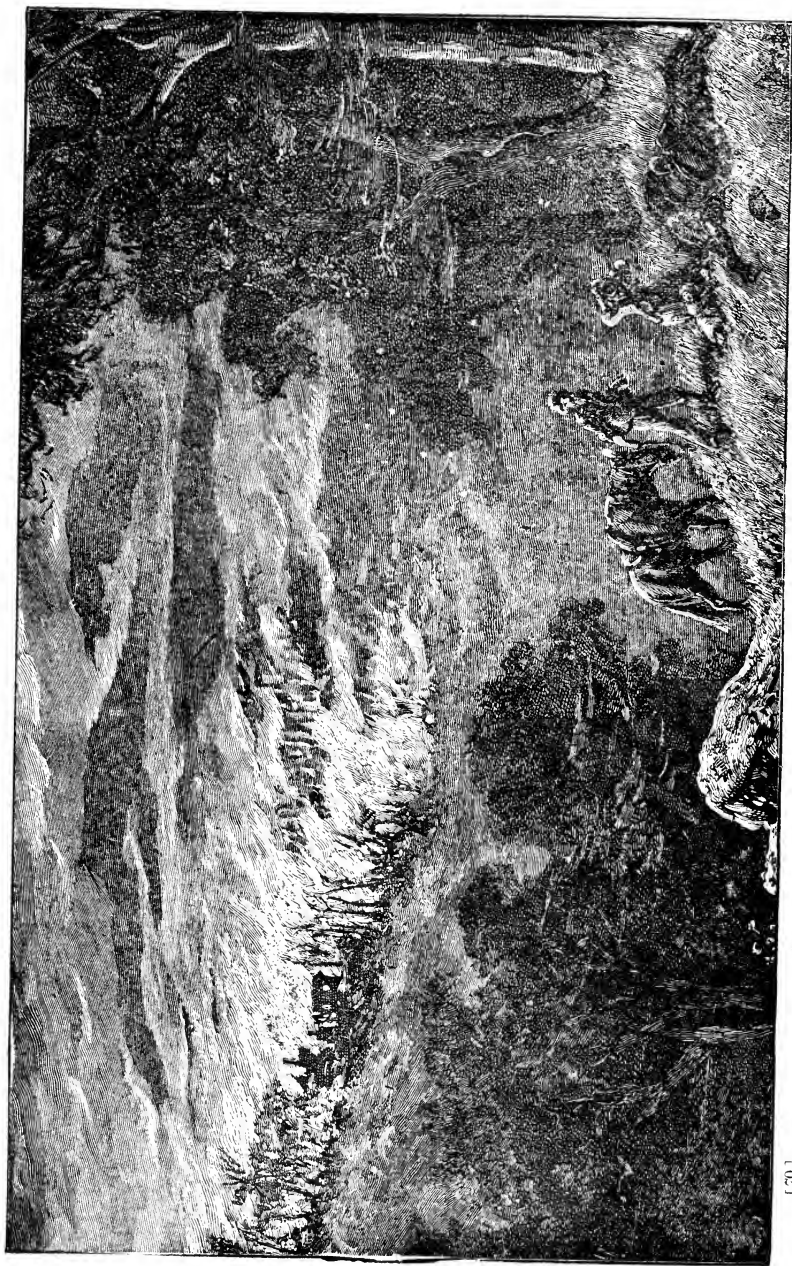
With what emphasis our Lord gave utterance to this sentiment ! It is a rebuke upon our unbelief. As we read it, God help us to believe it : "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." And as though this were not enough to lead us to unwavering faith, he adds these forcible words : "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away."

The word and promises of men may fail ; but Christ has given assurance that his word, and his word in reference to this solemn truth, will stand though heaven and earth fail.

"THE DAY AND HOUR."

VERSES 36, 37 : "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

This has become a very familiar passage of scripture because of the frequent use that is made of it to prove that nothing can be known of the proximity of the second coming of Christ. But if we pause a moment and lay beside this verse those we have just studied, we shall be able to discover the exact truth at once. "When ye shall see these things, know that it is near even at the doors ;" and, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled ;" "But of that day and hour knoweth no man." The line of knowledge, then, lies between the former expressions and the latter—between "even at the doors" and the definite day and hour. The former we may know, and every Christian is commanded to know. The latter no man knoweth. One may consistently say that he knows an event is



FOREST FIRE.

near, and yet say that he does not know the hour nor the day when it will take place. That this is the scriptural teaching upon this point may be readily proved by a reference to 1 Thess. 5 : 1-4 :—

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

An evident distinction is here drawn between two classes. Upon one class the day of the Lord will come as a thief. Those of the other are not in darkness that that day should come as a thief upon them. The children of God are children of light. Their heavenly Father knows the end from the beginning, and he has promised to reveal his secret to his people through his servants the prophets. Amos 3 : 7.

The apostle Peter also bears testimony to the same truth.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1 : 19.

The dark place here spoken of is the future. The past is lighted up by history, the present is brought to our knowledge by press and telegraph ; but the future no human art or wisdom can penetrate. Prophecy throws its gleam into those dark regions, yet unexplored, and marks out the path of human history centuries and ages before it has echoed to the footsteps of mankind. When at last we pass along the pathway, we may, if we will, recognize the waymarks set up here and there, every one of which

is a monument to the wisdom and knowledge of God, and the faithfulness of his word. Those who have no eyes to discern these things, no ears to hear, nor hearts to understand their significance, will pass on, and the final event will come upon them unawares. Not so with those who take heed to the things God has spoken.

We would not detract an iota from the force of the verse under consideration. It means all it says. No man knows the definite time of Christ's coming. The day and hour, and even the year of the second advent are purposely hidden. Some of the prophetic periods reach to the time of the end, while others extend still farther down, very near to the end itself; yet none of them reach to the coming of the Son of man. The prophecies clearly point to the period of the second advent, but do not give the definite time of that event.

But with this passage before us we may claim that it would be transcending its meaning to claim upon its authority that nothing should or could be known of the approach of Christ's coming. More than that, it is not inconsistent with the text nor improbable that prior to that event the Lord will in his own way reveal that which has hitherto been withheld. Those who claim that the text proves that nothing may be known of the period of the second advent, make it prove too much for their own unbelief. As recorded by Mark, the declaration reads: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." If the text proves that men will know nothing of the period of the second advent, it also proves that angels will know nothing of it, and also that the Son will know nothing of it, till the event takes place! This position proves too much, therefore proves nothing to the point.

Christ will know of the period of his second advent to this world. The holy angels who wait around the throne of heaven to receive messages relative to the part they act in the salvation of men, will know of the time of this closing event of salvation. And so will the waiting, watching people of God understand. An old English version of the passage reads, "But that day and hour no man maketh known, neither the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." This is the correct reading, according to several of the ablest critics of the age. The word *know* is used in the same sense here that it is by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:2: "For I determined not to know [make known] anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Men will not make known the day and hour, angels will not make it known, neither will the Son; but the Father will make it known. Says Campbell:—

"Macknight argues that the term *known* is here used as a causative, in the Hebrew sense of the conjugation *hiphil*, that is, *to make known*. . . . His [Christ's] answer is just equivalent to saying, The Father will make it known when it pleases him; but he has not authorized man, angel, or the Son to make it known. Just in this sense, Paul uses the term *know*, 1 Cor. 2:2: 'I came to you *making known* the testimony of God; for I determined to *make known* nothing among you but a crucified Christ.'"

Albert Barnes, in his "Notes on the Gospels," says:—

"Others have said that the verb rendered *knoweth* means sometimes to *make known*, or to reveal, and that the passage means, 'that day and hour none maketh known, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father.' It is true the word has sometimes that meaning, as 1 Cor. 2:2."

When the patriarch's work of warning and building was finished, God said to him, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." So when

the waiting, watching, weeping, toiling time shall be finished, and the saints shall all be sealed, and shut in with God, then, we conclude, will the voice of the Father from heaven make known the definite time. See Rev. 16:17; Joel 3:16; Jer. 25:30.

The present is emphatically the waiting, watching time. It is the especial period of the patience of the saints. The Lord appeals to us thus :—

“Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” Mark 13:35-37.

One of the fatal consequences of not watching is distinctly stated in Rev. 3:3:—

“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

In consequence of not watching, the people will remain in ignorance of the approach of that hour. And the unavoidable inference is that by watching they will be aware of and prepared for its coming. In answer to the agonizing prayer of the Son of God, “Father, glorify thy name,” there came a voice from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The disciples understood these words from heaven, while the people that stood by said it thundered. John 12:27-29. So will the waiting disciples of Christ understand the voice of God when he shall speak from on high. But the unbelieving world will not understand it. In comparing Noah’s days and ours, the Lord continues :—

NOAH’S TIME AND OURS.

VERSES 38, 39: “For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until

the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

A picture of the present condition of the mass of mankind is here drawn. The people of the last generation will be like those before the flood, while the ark was preparing. While Noah preached, and warned them of the coming flood, they mocked. He built the ark ; and they scoffed and jeered. He was a preacher of righteousness. His works were calculated to give edge to, and send home to the heart, what he preached. Every righteous sermon, and every blow struck in building the ark, condemned a careless, scoffing world. As the time drew nearer, the people grew more careless, more hardened, more bold and impudent, and their condemnation surer. Noah and his family stood alone. And could one family know more than all the world ? The ark was a matter of ridicule, and Noah was regarded as a willful bigot.

But the Lord calls Noah into the ark. And by the hand of Providence the beasts are led into the ark ; and the Lord shuts Noah in. This is regarded at first by the scoffing multitude as something wonderful ; but it is soon explained away by the wiser ones, so as to calm their fears, and they breathe easier.

The day of expectation finally arrives. The sun rises as usual, and the heavens are clear. "Now where is old Noah's flood ?" is heard from a thousand impious lips. The farmer is caring for his herds and lands, and the mechanic is pursuing his work of building. On this very day, some are being joined in marriage. With many it is a day of unusual feasting and sports. And while all are looking to long years of future prosperity and happiness, suddenly the heavens gather blackness. Fear fills every heart. The win-

dows of heaven open, and the rain descends in torrents. "The fountains of the great deep are broken up," and here and there come gushing up rivers of water. The valleys are fast filling up, and thousands are swept away in death. Awful death! made still more horrible by being in consequence of slighted mercy! But where is Noah? Ah! safe in the ark, borne upon the billows. Safe from the flood, for God "shut him in."

By some people, the evidences of the soon coming of Christ are considered insufficient to base faith upon. But the testimony and acts of one man in the case of Noah, condemned the people destroyed by the flood. The evidences then were sufficient, otherwise the world would not have been condemned. But a hundred times more convincing evidences come pouring in upon us that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. We follow down the several prophetic chains of Daniel and of the Revelation, and we find ourselves in every instance standing just before the day of wrath. We see the signs spoken of by prophets, by Christ, and by the apostles, fulfilling or fulfilled. And at the right time, and in the right manner, to fulfill certain prophecies, a solemn message arises in different parts of the world: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1. Wherever we look, we see prophecy fulfilling. While the knowledge of God and the spirit of holiness are departing, spiritual wickedness, like a flood, covers the land.

But these evidences are considered insufficient to rest faith upon. Well, what kind of evidence would the unbelieving have? "When the signs of the end," says the skeptic, "are fulfilled, they will be so plain that no one

can doubt." But if the signs are of such a nature, and are fulfilled in such a manner, as to compel all to believe in the coming of Christ, how can it be as it was in the days of Noah? Men were not then compelled to believe. But eight believing souls were saved, while all the world besides sank in their unbelief beneath the waters of the flood. God has never revealed his truth to man in a manner to compel him to believe. Those who have wished to doubt his word, have found a wide field in which to doubt, and a broad road to perdition; while those who have wished to believe, have ever found an everlasting rock upon which to rest their faith.

Just before the end, the world will be hardened in sin, and indifferent to the claims of God. Men will be careless in regard to the warnings of danger, and blinded by cares, pleasures, and riches. An unbelieving generation will be eating, drinking, marrying, building, planting, and sowing. It is right to eat and drink to sustain nature, but the sin is in excess and gluttony. The marriage covenant is holy, but God's glory is seldom thought of. Building, planting, and sowing, necessary for convenient shelter, food, and clothing, are right; but the world has gone wholly after these things, so that men have no time nor disposition to think of God, heaven, Christ's coming, and the Judgment. This world is their god, and all their energies of body and mind are made to serve it. And the evil day is put far away.

The faithful watchman who sounds the alarm as he sees destruction coming, is held up before the people from the pulpits of our land, and by the religious press, as a fanatic, a teacher of dangerous heresies; while in contrast is set forth a long period of peace and prosperity to the church. So the churches are quieted to sleep. The scoff-



THE DAY OF WRATH.

fer continues to scoff, and the mocker mocks on. But that day is coming. Thus saith the prophet of God:—

“How! ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them. . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.” Isa. 13 : 6-9.

Most dreadful day! and is it near?—Yes; it hasteth! It hasteth greatly! What a description given by the prophet! Read it; and as you read, try to realize how dreadful will be that day:—

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zeph. 1 : 14-18.

PEACE AND SAFETY.

The attitude of the religious world toward this most important subject is worthy of more than passing notice both because of its effect upon the cause of truth and also because it of itself is a sign of the times. While it is true that many individuals in the different Christian denominations recognize with more or less distinctness the fact that we are living in the last days, with many of these

it does not become a practical truth. Outside of these there are many who ridicule the idea as preposterous and outlandish ; and in opposition to the message that Christ is soon coming, raise the cry of, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Such teaching is alluded to by the prophet in Eze. 13:10, 11.

The groundwork of the peace and safety cry is the doctrine of the temporal millennium. This teaches that the world is now entering, or about to enter upon a period of universal peace and good will, that the moral tone of the world is improving, men and nations are learning righteousness; and the gospel of Christ is about to become the controlling principle in public and private life. And, further, this happy state will continue for one thousand years, which period of time the word millennium literally signifies. At the end of that time, perhaps, the Lord will come. However, if this doctrine be true, it will make but little difference to this generation or to the one living at the close of the period whether he does or not. The verses we have just considered which liken the last days to those of Noah wholly disprove this position. In addition to what Matthew states, Luke gives a still more forcible version of our Saviour's words :—

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30.

Paul writes in his epistles to Timothy as follows :—

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” 1 Tim. 4 : 1.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof : from such turn away.” 2 Tim. 3 : 1-5.

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Verse 13.

In very many scriptures it is plainly declared that when Christ comes, he comes not only to reward and save his people but also to punish his enemies. Looking upon the last days he exclaims, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18 : 8. The idea of a thousand years of peace and righteousness before Christ comes might be dismissed as utterly out of the question. But space will be given to one or two passages supposed to teach it, which will represent the whole class. The first and chief is found in Isa. 2 : 2-4 : —

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Almost the same language is used in Micah 4 : 1-3. It is enough to call attention to the authorship of the

propositions contained in the text. They come from the people. "Many people shall go and say, Come ye," etc. Inspiration asserts that in the last days the mountain or power of the Lord's house or church shall be established in the tops of the mountains, or civil power. Undoubtedly it will. Everything is tending to the union of Church and State; and the professed church of Christ is riding on a high tide to civil power in all lands. But farewell to godliness and spiritual power. When this is accomplished, in a general chorus all will proclaim the dawning millennium.

How the Lord regards the people who are saying these things is shown in the succeeding verses:—

"Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots: their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made." Isa. 2:6-8.

Now let us see what God says on the same point and concerning the same time:—

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw

their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3:9-16

Mark, this is not what the people say, but what the Lord says of the very same time when the people are preaching a good time coming.

Another verse referred to, and representing quite a numerous class of similar ones, is found in Num. 14:21.

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

There is no occasion to modify or limit the meaning of those words; for their utmost significance will be realized. But when?—When sin and the curse are wiped away. After the purifying fires of the day of the Lord have burned up the last work and relic of rebellion, and the earth made new in Edenic glory comes again from the hand of its Maker, as beautiful, yea, more beautiful, if possible, than at first. It would not be within the limits of this pamphlet to follow out this subject, but the reader is referred to the following scriptures: Isa. 65:17-22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21 and 22, and to published works.¹

In that state this and all kindred scriptures will meet a fulfillment that is ample and complete. But for such a condition of things this side of the coming of Christ neither the Bible nor the trend of events give any promise whatever.

Judging of the probability of the conversion of the world from the facts, it would seem to be far from striking. The following table gives a comparatively accurate showing of the present religious status of the world:—

¹ "Home of the Saved," price 10 cts. Address publishers of this pamphlet.



Jews and Parsees	15,470,000
Greek Catholics	84,136,000
Protestants	114,815,500
Brahminical Hindoos	120,000,000
Mohammedans	122,400,000
Roman Catholics	255,000,000
Pagans	227,000,000
Buddhists.	482,000,000
Unclassified	51,050,000

Concerning the very small proportion of this number classed in the list of Christians, Bishop Foster has very aptly said :—

“There are some who too fondly anticipate a millennium. There is a lack of information on the progress of Christianity. The facts are misstated daily in pulpits all over the country. Ministers hesitate to present the worst side for fear of causing discouragement, and they create hopes that are never realized. We are not at the dawn of a millennium. Compared with the work to be done, the past is nothing. Our children’s children for ten generations to come must labor harder than we are doing, to accomplish the conversion of the world. The world’s population is 1,500,000,000. Of these, Christians number less than a third; and half of that third belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants number 114,000,000. They are divided into 500 sects. And this number of their strength includes, also, all the thieves, ex-convicts, the debased, besotted, and the speckled and streaked in Christendom.”—*Northwestern Christian Advocate of Dec. 2, 1885.*

Farther on in the same article the Bishop said :—

“Before us we have the great problem—the 1,100,000,000 of pagans to convert to Christianity. That is the solid rock that looms up in our path. Look at it; see what work has been done in 1800 years, and how much is yet to be accomplished. In India, after more than a hundred years of mission work, we have 600,000 native converts and 2,000,000 Christians among 260,000,000 heathen. Can we remove that solid boulder that is as old as the hills? . . . Our Methodist Church we think the most divine and ineffable. We boast that we are going to con-

quer the world, and come from our palaces and princely farms to subscribe fifty cents a head for the undertaking ! It is a burning disgrace that excites pity and disgust."

And as to the prospects for universal peace, the following recent statement of the armament of Europe does not indicate that the nations are really contemplating such a happy consummation : —

NATION.	MEN.	HORSES.	CANNON.
Russia	1,519,810	181,000	2,084
Germany.....	835,000	96,000	2,022
Austria	856,980	58,125	1,600
England	478,800
France	1,850,000

The remaining states of Europe make up with the above a total of about 6,000,000 men.

THE FINAL SEPARATION.

VERSES 40, 41 : "Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This language shows the final separation between the righteous and the wicked. There is no elaborate explanation as to how the circumstances will meet their fulfillment, but that is not the essential force of the text. The line will in some cases be drawn between those who are intimately related. Some members of the same family will be taken away by the judgments of God, while others will be left to receive their coming Lord.

THOSE WHO WATCH WILL KNOW THE TIME.

VERSES 42-44 : "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the

house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

The injunction to watchfulness is repeatedly given by our Saviour in connection with his teaching in reference to his second advent. These injunctions must apply especially to those who live in proximity to that event. This fact is convincing evidence that the Lord is not displeased with those who anticipate his coming, and study the word in reference to it. No one watches for that which he does not expect, and indifference or aversion toward the coming of Christ is sure evidence of coldness toward Christ himself. If we love Jesus, we shall love his appearing ; and if we love his appearing, we shall be eagerly watching and waiting for it. But if we knew the hour when he would come, we should not watch for his coming, nor could we with eagerness expect his coming if we had no knowledge of its approach. The course of time has been measured off in definite periods down to the beginning of the present generation. The time from the end of the prophetic periods to the coming of Christ is emphatically the waiting, watching time. Those who watch, as our Lord commands, will eventually know the time. No man will make it known, for it is not revealed to man in the Scriptures. Angels will not make it known, though they may minister to, and communicate with, the children of men. Neither will the Son. But the Father will make it known when he speaks again from heaven.

It is undoubtedly true that the unscriptural and irrational course pursued by many so-called Adventists in repeatedly setting a time of their own for the Lord to come has had the effect to disgust many with the whole

matter. This is the enemy's work. He will seek thus to obscure each truth by bringing it into the shadow of reproach. But it is unwise to be thus misled. Probably there is no prophecy that better describes the present state of unbelief in the world in regard to the second advent, caused partly by fanatical time-movements, than the following :—

“Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God: I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged, for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God.” Eze. 12:22-25.

The burden of this prophecy is time; therefore the word here mentioned that the Lord will speak, will be the time. Rev. 3:3, is also to the point:—

“Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

Those who do not watch, will not know the hour. Those who watch will know the hour.

The present watching, waiting position requires much faith and patience. Says Paul:—

“Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [in proclaiming the coming of Christ], ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith;

but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. 10 : 35-39.

Says James: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5 : 7, 8.

Jesus says: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3 : 10.

The present position and present duty of God's people are defined in Rev. 14 : 12: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT.

VERSES 45-47: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

In this figure, Christ is represented as the Lord of the household of faith (see Mark 13 : 35 ; Heb. 3 : 6), leaving his house, and committing the work of caring for his church to his servants. A blessing is promised those servants who are found faithfully discharging this duty when their Lord comes. They are to feed the flock of God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. Acts 20 : 28. They must preach the word. 2 Tim. 4 : 2. They should watch for souls as they that must give ac-

count. Heb. 13:17. They will not only give meat to the household, but they will give it in due season. They will preach the *present* truth.

And meat in due season when Christ's coming draws near, will be the gospel of the kingdom. Verse 14. It will embrace warnings, instructions, and encouragements pertaining to a message that is designed and adapted to prepare the world for so solemn an event. Suppose, for a moment, that when Noah had received his message of the coming flood to give to the world, he had reasoned with worldly wisdom that as such a thing never had occurred, and from all appearances seemed very unlikely to occur, and hence to preach it would subject him to reproach, it would be better to avoid any particular allusion to such an unwelcome subject. His preaching seemed to excite only ridicule. He could retain his own private convictions and preach the ordinary principles of righteousness, saying, "Do not so, my brethren." And if the people were only prepared for the flood, that would be all that would be necessary. Of such a course we can say two things. He would thus have proved very unfaithful to his trust, and the blood of his fellow-men would have been upon him; and he would have done just as thousands are doing now. He certainly would not have represented the faithful and wise servant. So it is now. A solemn responsibility is placed upon the watchmen:—

"Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But

he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." Eze. 33:2-7.

When Jesus comes, the faithful servants will be found proclaiming his coming and teaching the necessary preparation. The Saviour speaks of such as "faithful and wise."

1. He is faithful. As a faithful watchman, he will give timely warning when he sees the sword coming. His work just before the end, is seen in the following scriptures:—

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Joel 2:1.

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2. Tim. 4:1-5.

2. He is wise. "He that winneth souls is wise." He must be wise. He will hold forth the truth in its harmony and beauty, and thus expose error and win men to the truth. When it becomes his duty to "reprove and rebuke," it will be at a proper time and place, and then with all "long-suffering and doctrine." He will study to

show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Tim. 2:15.

THE EVIL SERVANT.

VERSES 48-51: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What the evil servant says and does, shows most clearly the position and work of the faithful and wise servant. The evil servant says, "My lord delayeth his coming," because the faithful servant is proclaiming the coming of his lord. The evil servant smites the faithful servant, because he teaches the soon coming of his Lord. The faithful servant, true to his commission to preach the "gospel of the kingdom" to a fallen church and a scoffing world, toils on, and for this the evil servant smites him. Not with the fist, perhaps, but with the tongue of obloquy and reproach. That there should be professed servants of Christ engaged in smiting those who are faithfully warning the world, need not cause surprise in view of the past, but must cause sorrow in the heart of every lover of truth. The wicked servant says in heart, and some are saying with their lips, The Lord is not coming. The world is now just starting out upon its career of knowledge and enjoyment. Where is the promise or indication of his coming? Some say, He may come to-night, he may not come in a million years, thus neutralizing the truth. Such men will be found criticising and discounting the Scriptures and subjecting them to the tests of human philosophy and science. The

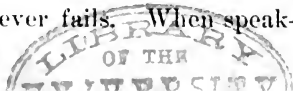
only safety for the people is to look beyond such watchmen. Let them take the Bible for themselves, and there discerning the truth, embrace it, and live according to it.

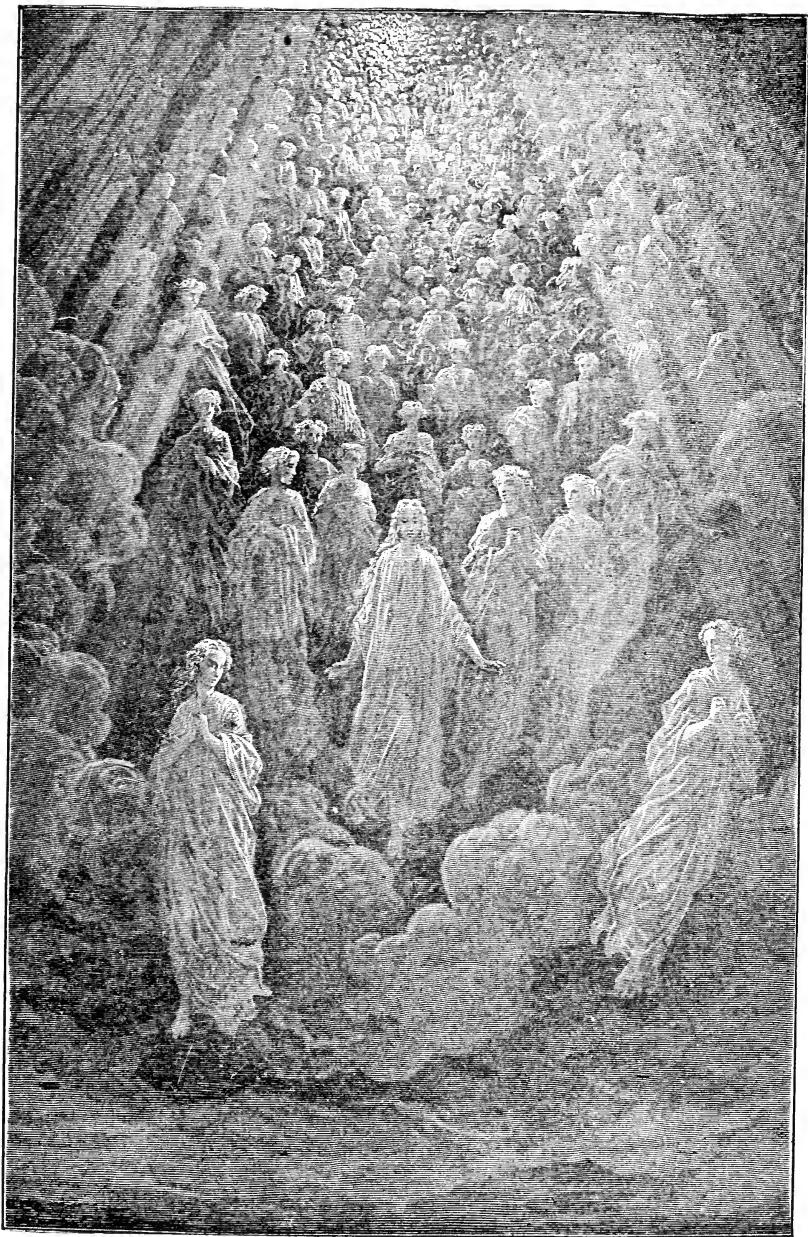


CONCLUSION.

The impression prevails to some extent that he who teaches that Christ is soon coming is acting the *rôle* of an alarmist. If so, we have seen that the great Teacher has placed himself at the head of the class. No one has spoken more positively upon this point than he has done. He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3. There is nothing ambiguous about that language. A child can understand it. It means that Jesus will come again. In the remarkable chapter we have here reviewed, the Saviour takes up the subject specifically, and not only affirms the fact of his coming, but foretells in explicit language the events which he would have us recognize as signs of the near approach of his coming and the end of the world.

But the message of Christ's second coming is not sensational in its essential character. It is a solemn, practical truth. It is full of warning and admonition to sinners and worldly professors, and full of comfort to the faithful followers of Christ. It is spoken of in the Scriptures as a fact, established upon the word which never fails. When speak-





ing of his second advent, the Saviour said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35. To disbelieve in his coming would be to doubt one of the two great features of the gospel plan. What the harvest is to seed-time, Christ's second advent will be to his first. To doubt that he ever came to earth would be to subvert the gospel. To disbelieve his second coming would nullify in the mind his first coming, and rob the sacrifice of its glorious reward.

The apostle Paul speaks of the second advent as "that blessed hope." Titus 2:13. Jesus says: "And when these things [the signs of his coming] begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." The prophet Isaiah anticipates the feelings of God's people who will witness the event, and expresses them in the following manner: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. 25:9.

At his coming, the dead in Christ will be raised to everlasting life. The righteous living will be changed to immortality. The hand of our Saviour will wipe away all tears; "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Why should we not rejoice in such a prospect? Who would not welcome such a friend? Who would not rejoice in the prospect of such a consummation?

But it is true that the grand event will not be attended with joy alone. There will be dismay and anguish. For while one prophet records the exclamations of joyful anticipation, another has foreseen and recorded the cry of de-

spair. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17. A vast number will thus lament. All who cannot join the shout of welcome will unite in the wail of despair. There will be but two classes in that day. And to one of those classes each one living will belong. To which shall I belong? Solemn question. To which party will you belong, reader? No one can *wait* for Christ who is not prepared for his coming. Only the precious blood of Jesus that cleanses from sin can prepare us to receive him and fit us to dwell in his presence. Have you an interest in his forgiving love? Is your peace made with God? If so, his coming will have no terror to you, for he comes to save his waiting people.

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